

# MAN

## *Mutable and Immutable*

THE FUNDAMENTAL STRUCTURE  
OF SOCIAL LIFE

*by Kurt Riezler*



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AS

ἔστιν γὰρ εἶναι

Parmenides



## *Preface*

WE HAVE DISCARDED eternal man and cut mutable man into pieces to be inquired into by different sciences, each of which claims autonomy. The pieces fit into one another less and less. A relatively immutable remnant, called human nature, is left to the care of a biology that speaks the language of physics and chemistry. In this language the mammal we call Man is meaningless to himself.

In these reflections about man I shall not deal with the specific predicament and feeling of futility of modern man. Nor is it my aim to recommend ways of salvation or consolation, to make manifest or to conceal a 'tragic' abyss, to solve or to submit to an ultimate paradox, to evoke or to heal primordial anguish.

Common sense assumes that man, though cut in pieces, is one. As one he is born, as one he dies. What is his permanence in all this boundless change of societies and cultures—not with respect to this or that isolated piece or aspect, but to man as one, who as subject matter of one science is also the subject matter of the others?

Where is the ground on which an answer could stand and survive the change of societies? Though this question contains a philosophical problem of the first magnitude, I do not start from, but end with, the philosophical question. I start from experience no one can doubt, and lead through certain phenomena everyone can observe to the threshold of philosophy proper.



The human passions, moods, sentiments, and attitudes seem to vary only within the limits of a certain frame and in accordance with certain rules which in earlier times were thought of as rules of a logic of the human heart.

In quest of this frame I inquire into the passions of man. I can take only a few steps, groping my way cautiously. I do not try to say startling or profound things about man, his misery, and his joy. I shall be content if I succeed in putting the oldest and simplest things in the unity of the fundamental context which, in the confusion of our words and things, amid the noise of pretense, zeal, solace, and promise even our hearts have forgotten.

I express my gratitude to the many thinkers, dead or alive, to whose experience and insight I am indebted, to friends for advice and encouragement, to the *Journal of Philosophy* for permitting me to use an article of mine about the 'Historian and Truth' in Part VI, Chapter 2, and to the quarterly, *Social Research*, for permission to reprint my article on 'Language', Part III, Chapter 4. I am also grateful to Martha Anderson for polishing, correcting, and editing the manuscript.

KURT RIEZLER

Chicago  
May 1950



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PART ONE

*The Point of Departure*



## Chapter 1

# THE MAN-ENVIRONMENT SCHEME ARTICULATED

MY FIRST QUESTION concerns the immutable framework within which all changes in human life occur. No one denies there is such a frame. Man is finite in many respects, chained to time and its pace, restricted in both time and space. A being among other beings, some of which are of his own kind, he is dependent upon the things he needs, 'in' something that he is not. He moves himself, moves other things, and is moved by others and other things. Thus he acts and is acted upon.

I do not ask for an *essentia* of man as man in an order of many *essentiae*, to be defined by a *differentia specifica* within a *genus proximum*. I seek to determine a mode of being. For is is irrelevant whether man shares this mode of being with all things that are, with some, or with none.

Even the sciences presuppose such a framework. Whenever they speak of man and his environment, of good or bad adjustment, of an effective or ineffective relationship of man to the forces of his environment, they posit a universal design of a fundamental situation to which man is bound.

The formula seems to say little. General 'Man' is ambigu-



ous; the term 'environment' inarticulate. The formula hides the distinctions it entails.

From the beginning and for always, man is a man in an environment. This environment is the environment of man. Man and environment are related to each other in the unity of a relational structure. Thus they are thought of as variable relata that are related to each other in variable relations. Moreover, whoever speaks of good or bad adjustment or the like permits the relationship to range between two poles, 'good' and 'bad,' whereas the variability of the relata remains undetermined. He divides the variables into two groups; in mathematical language:  $M_n - R_1^\circ - E_n$ . Whoever, going beyond this, endows man with a tendency, drive, or impulse to adjust himself to the environment and the environment to himself—a not immodest assumption—adds a vector. This being, man, is 'directed,' aims at, or strives for—whatever term is most innocuous—a specific kind of relation between the two variables, man and environment.

In any case, the relational context is posited as a unity of a pattern in which alone men are men and environments are environments. This framework is as old as the living creature. In it all life has moved and will move forever. However we formulate it, we must posit it or its equivalent as prior to any data or facts of any observer. All things human are what they are within that frame.

The man-environment scheme is the only formulation of such a framework that enjoys general acceptance. It owes this acceptance to its barrenness. Usually this scheme is applied in all innocence, and its logical character as contextual unity quickly forgotten. Man is considered as one, the environment as another set of data, in an objective absolutized world. This allegedly objective world, however, though posited as absolute, is merely the environment of the observer. In all cases in which the observer and the observed human beings do not belong to the same society and time, the naive identification of the environment of the observer with the objective world is bound to lead to fruitless pains and stillborn results.<sup>1</sup>

Difficult as it may be, it is necessary to uphold unswervingly the notion of a unity of a relational context that ante-



cedes the data observed. If, and only if, this is done, can the meager scheme serve as the starting point for many a question.

The term environment must be made explicit. Man and environment are not referred to each other as rigid facts. Each may have a certain flexibility beyond its fixed factual character. Not only what they are but also what they can be, not only actualities but also potentialities face each other. Man is what he can do. Things are to him what he can do to or about them. As beings capable of this, incapable of that, the Pilgrim Fathers landed on the shore of Massachusetts Bay, an environment to which this could be, that could not be done.

This distinction is simple. We recognize it as we endow both men and the things around them with faculties, skills, dispositions, and the like. Flexible man, fettered to a rigid environment, becomes rigid himself. To a rigid man, even a flexible environment is rigid.

The second distinction is not quite as simple.<sup>2</sup> In using the man-environment scheme, individual psychology discriminates between the functional or behavioral and the geographical or objective environment. The functional environment is referred to the individual observed by the psychologist. The individual is usually thought to be the center of his environment which is his, and only his, 'psychological field.' The geographical environment is described as relative to the anonymous observer of the sciences; but since it is the environment of no one, it is not environment at all. Yet merely distinguishing between two meanings of 'environment' is not enough. The two meanings can be distinguished but not separated. They point to, and need, each other. The geographical and objective environment, although not described as anyone's functional environment, is the framework of the functional environment of possible but still indefinite beings. The functional environment of the isolated individual cannot subsist unless it is referred to an environment that, though qualified only subjectively, is at least posited as 'absolute.' Everyone is aware of the necessity of such a reference. Nobody considers his environment as revolving only around himself as its center. Everybody thinks of it as the environment of other beings,



known or unknown, men, beasts, or gods. Any isolation of the individual in the middle of a psychological field cripples the psychological reality, and is dearly paid for, since it blocks the way to the psychology of society. Man, from the beginning, refers his functional environment to an objective environment and thinks of this objective environment as an environment of other beings.

Here a third and fundamental difference hidden in the general term demands to be made explicit. To the observer, anything, no matter what it may be, is an 'object' of observation. In the way in which the theory of knowledge asks its puzzling question, the thing to be 'known', whatever it may be, becomes the generalized object of the generalized subject of cognition. We should, however, be careful. The relation of man to the things and beings of his environment does not follow this pattern. These things and beings are of two kinds. Some are 'subjects', others 'objects'. The man of the man-environment scheme, is not the generalized 'subject' of the theory of knowledge; he is not the only subject. Some beings in his environment may be subjects too, though, as things to be observed or known, they are merely objects. We must, therefore, within the environment of the man observed, discriminate between two kinds of beings—'subjects' and 'objects'. But this need not mean that the one kind are men, the other not men, or that one is alive, the other lifeless. These would be distinctions within an objective order of a multitude of beings. In the present context, distinctions within that 'objective' order are irrelevant. The proper differentiation must be looked for in the relationship to the man of whose environment we speak. Objects as objects are objecta, 'standing against'. They are objects of a real or possible subject. Being an object is being *πρὸς ἄλλο τί*: with respect to something else. As far as things are merely objects, they stand in a one-way relation to a subject whose object they are. The subject, however, is not only *πρὸς ἄλλο τί*—something-to-other; it is *ἐν ἑαυτῷ*, in itself. Thus the subject has the power to bestow on other things a kind of being-relative to itself. By virtue of this power, the subject is a 'subject'.



As man uses this power the things of his environment become his objects. But the other human beings in his environment also have this power. They bestow upon him, the sovereign in the center of his own functional environment, a kind of being-relative to themselves. Even the child in the cradle has such power and quickly learns to use it. Even animals have this power. The cow lets the grass be fodder, the lizard lets this stone be a hiding place, relative to itself. The poor stone has no such power. It cannot bestow a being-relative to itself upon another stone, a snake, or a man. I can be something to my dog, but not to the stone. The dog can make demands, or challenge me; the stone cannot, unless I think of it as a kind of subject and invest it with magic, divine or demonic might.

The man-environment scheme refers the functional environment in a one-way relation to the isolated individual of individual psychology. This is its major deficiency. The individual does not merely refer the beings of his environment to himself; he can refer himself to the beings of his environment and does it in manifold ways—in love and hate, in devotion, care, and revenge. He wants to do this; indeed, he cannot help doing it, no matter how much he would like to be the pivot of all things. Some beings of his environment have the power to endow him with a 'being-to-others'. Confronted by this power, he is aware of 'being-something-to-others'. He may even feel the need for it, though merely his vanity is in question. This being-to-others is a part of his being. From the beginning to the end he refers not only his environment to himself but also himself to his environment.

There is still a fourth distinction blurred by the ambiguity of the term environment. Is this environment intended to mean a sum or aggregate of all the things around us or a unity of an order, a whole? The term itself tells us nothing on this score. A glance at any example suffices to show that man's behavior is by no means merely behavior toward the simple things around him, toward one thing after another. He does not pile experience upon experience. He behaves always and of necessity toward a unity of an order he presupposes, de-



signs, or discovers. This order is intended to cover all single things. All are determined and qualified by their place in it. This order is one and only one. Its 'totality' does not mean the completeness of an aggregate no element of which is lacking; it means the unity of a whole. It encompasses all things—the actual and the possible, the past, present, and future, the remembered and the expected. Environment cannot be the appropriate term for this order. Man faces his environment as something other than himself. But where? Not in the environment of the observer. Man does not face this unity of an order as he faces his 'environment'. He himself is 'in' it. It encompasses him as it does everything else. He belongs to this order. It pervades him. Thus he is part of it, and so knows himself. As the whole in which he is, this order is 'his' world. Environment suggests an 'against', 'world', an 'in'. This small word 'in' is difficult though important for the student of man.

The man-environment scheme, however meager and ambiguous, is intended to designate a framework in which variable relata are related to one another in variable relations. The scheme itself claims to be universal and changeless. It is prior to all facts. Each particular fact is what it is within this frame. The scheme is barren. The universal frame of human life is richer. The distinctions I propose are to make the man-environment scheme articulate. They may help us to spell out the meaning of 'adjustment' and 'maladjustment' which is now an empty generalization everyone interprets as he pleases in terms of the particular conditions of the society of his concern. 'Adjustment', spelled out, will no longer be merely adjustment.

The distinctions are only the first step in the search for a framework which, as an hypothesis, could be hoped to allow for the diversity of human life. No matter how we articulate the poor scheme by these and other distinctions, the quest for such a frame must remain within its logical structure. The frame is conceived of as a relational structure in which man and man, man and thing, man and world, thing and world, are related to one another in a fabric of possible relations. No change can infringe upon the boundaries of the frame in which all changes occur.



## Chapter 2

# THE CONTEXTUAL UNITY AND THE STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE

I SUBMIT A SECOND, no less preliminary, consideration. Languages seem to arise as multiplicities of signs for a variegated multiplicity of things, beings, events, sentiments, actions, and relations. These signs can be combined in all sorts of ways. Although this is our habitual manner of thinking about language, perhaps man in building these signs could not avoid articulating at the same time the joints of the skeleton of his own mode of existence. This is how the inner structure of language came to correspond with the fundamental situation of human life.

As any language must serve all the changing purposes, situations, actions, and emotions of human life, it is not absurd at least to inquire whether, in the inner fabric of language, traces of a fundamental situation that underlies all life are preserved despite all the infinite variety of forms, laws, and structures of the many languages. The grammarians of the Middle Ages searched for a *grammatica universalis speculativa*. If there should be such a *grammatica*, it might correspond to a *societas*



*universalis speculativa*, that is, to a fundamental social situation in which man speaks to man.

Although the dream of the old grammarian may be merely a dream and the different languages diverge widely, each language gives many hints the student of man would be wise to heed. I cite only two examples.

In the voices of the verb we distinguish not merely classes of events or of relations between events. We spell out our existence. Man acts and is acted upon; as a being that acts he is acted upon; as a being that is acted upon, he acts. In addition to the active and passive voices, Greek has a middle voice. Man can at the same time be both the acting subject and the object acted upon. In his action each of these three possibilities entails the other two. We cannot choose one and leave the others.

The tenses of the verb distinguish past, present, and future events or acts. In doing this, they articulate man's bondage to time, the time-structure of his life or what he calls his existence. As beings that have a present, we come out of a past and go into a future. As beings that expect, we remember; as beings that remember, we expect. We can expect a future from which we shall look into the past; we can retain a past from which we once looked into a future. We shall have a past and we have had a future. Thus *praesens*, *perfectum*, *imperfectum*, *futurum*, and *futurum exactum* spell different relations to time implied in our being. Again, we cannot accept the one and reject the others; all of them together are the lot of the living. The dead have none. They 'are' not.

Thus we can separate neither one mood or tense from other moods and tenses, nor mood and tense from each other. We distinguish them within the unity of a fabric. Only together, with respect to one another, are they concrete. Separation is a kind of abstraction.

The manner of expression may vary accents or shade degrees of clarity; it does not create the 'thing itself'. This 'thing' is a dynamic unity; it is neither the product of a society nor the result of an evolution, but the context of a reality in which societies come into being and evolutions evolve.



The time of man interlaces in a distinct way distinct possibilities within a frame that not even his thinking, dreaming, wishing, or deceiving can break without losing all reference to a possible reality.

It may well be that personal pronouns distinguish not merely a multitude of beings. I, Thou, He, She, It, We, You, They, are not merely different signs for different classes of beings or of relations between beings. These classes may satisfy the grammarian; they will not satisfy the student of man. We would do better to regard the pronoun as unity of a relational structure. In it language spells out the social situation as unity of its constituents. Any situation in which a human being may find himself contains all the personal pronouns, explicitly or implicitly, directly or indirectly, and owes its living concreteness to the richness of the reciprocal relationships.

By nature any ego or I is someone's actual or potential Thou. It is part of a We that as a We sets itself off from a You or a They; within this We it is a He or a She seen or missed by others; it is itself a part of those others who as They look on and have an opinion. The fabric of the context in which any I is an I includes them all, whether in the given situation of a moment they are actually present or not. Even when absent, the absence of the absent element is present, as deficiency. Even Robinson Crusoe or the hermit does not escape the presence of the absent-You. In the pronouns, too, language articulates the unity of the context in which I am an 'I' and may be your You.

Perhaps here, too, language gives us a hint we would be wise to heed, lest we be led astray at the very beginning. We say: 'Man.' Yet Man is merely the name of a class. This or that man only is real, an individual man here and now, this member of the class we call Man. But the generalized man is not only an I. The individual member of the class is never only an I. The isolated individual is not representative of general man. Man in general is not the common denominator of all isolated individuals. The isolated individual is a forsaken, and as such, a rather peculiar man.



Language gives us other hints of the same kind pointing in the same direction.<sup>3</sup> Bent upon ordering multiplicities of separate data, we pay no heed as this interest guides our natural manner of thinking. A unity should be articulated, its hidden joints laid bare, not a 'Many' classified in groups. These hints language gives indicate that man, speaking to man, yielded to a compelling experience—the experience of the iron frame of a fundamental situation within which all human beings converse.

These hints are not intended to prove anything. They are merely proffered to help in the search for a tentative hypothesis concerning the unchangeable frame within which all the countless changes occur. This frame may not be made up of pieces that have a being independent of one another. It may be the unity of a context, the only possible one, necessary by its own reason. Such a framework I seek. I call it preliminarily the fundamental structure of human life.



## PART TWO

### *The Genesis of Society*







## Chapter 1

# CONSTITUENTS OF SOCIAL LIFE

**H**UMAN EXISTENCE is social existence; even the existence <sup>1</sup> of the hermit in the wilderness, of the prisoner in his cell, of Crusoe on his island, of a Christian abandoned by his God.

By the genesis of society I mean the logical, not the historical, genesis. Its logical genesis is intended to unfold the elements implied in any historical genesis of a society. 'Society' does not mean this or that one of the many kinds of groups. It means the *societas universalis speculativa* as the model of society. The scheme of this model must contain the human elements that in their mutual relationships constitute society as society. To be worth the name, such a model should embody and conjoin the points of departure for the manifold variations of societies as they actually come to be. There are a thousand kinds of society. Sociology tries to start by classifying groups and encounters great difficulties, since it lacks principles and criteria for classification. There are play groups, families, associations of interests, church communities, women's clubs. Most of them, however, presuppose society, since they could not come to be were there not already society. I search for the constituents of the kind of society in which human beings have already lived, must have lived, before they could associate in any one of these groups.



I imagine a first man—a pale construction—hunting an animal whose meat he desires. Lest he fail to pass Thomas Hobbes, I imagine him to be full of appetites and desires, loving himself above all, trembling in fear of death. Pursuing his prey, he meets the second man. He realizes he is not alone, confronted only with the thing of his want and cupidity—an 'I' facing an 'it'.

Various things may happen. The first man may elude the second. He may kill him. In either case the history of society ends before it begins. There are, however, three other possibilities. The first man may join forces with the second in hunting the animal and divide the prey. He may fight him, conquer him, spare his life, make him, the weaker, a serf and permit him to gnaw the bone of the animal slain with his help. Yet he could, especially if of the opposite sex, be pleased by or try to please the second—independently of his interest in the animal to be hunted.

To these three possibilities roughly three elements in social life correspond: the contract<sup>2</sup> of material interest, power, and a kind of love, which, however, is by no means yet 'love'.

In each of these three cases the first I, the second I, and the it of need and desire are related to one another in certain ways. These relations are of different kinds. They distinguish co-operation of interest, power in domination and serfdom, and that elusive something here called love. These three may become intertwined with or permeate one another and mingle in countless ways. Their differences must be kept in mind as differences of relations, not yet of motives. 'Motives' are still and may remain obscure.<sup>3</sup>

In a co-operation of mere interests, each co-operating I would be to the other merely an it. The pure case, however, is only a construct of thought. No such co-operation could last, though we may co-operate for a short while to a limited purpose with many another I at whom we look merely under the aspect of our interest in an it.

The second I is a subject. It has the power to bestow on the it of my interest a being-relative to itself that may not correspond to my interest. The first I meets this power and must



break or bow to it. The stronger forces the weaker to submit to his interest in the it. In the case of domination the master treats the serf as object, tool, slave. In the pure case no direct line links the serf to the it. The connecting line leads through the master. The it is to the serf what it is to the master. Even the serf himself is what he is to the master. The perfect serf refers himself to the master. This is the view of the serf as serf. Neither the serf to the master nor the master to the serf is a You. Both are 'he' to each other: the master writ large by the serf, the serf writ small by the master.

This relationship too is in movement. Though to the master the serf may be only a serf, no serf is to himself only a serf of his master. The serf as human being remains a subject. As subject he claims to be to the master not only an object. He may hide the claim; he holds and will raise it when the day comes.<sup>4</sup>

In co-operation or in domination, one day sooner or later the first I will look into the face of the partner or serf. He may not want or be compelled to do so. In this moment another element creeps into the mere contract of partnership or into the mere serfdom of the serf. Only together with this other element can interest and power pretend to found a society.

This element is not new, posterior to contract and domination. As both the first and second man in this idle construction were born and reared by mothers, it was already present—silently or as lack—in their first meeting. They already belonged to a kind of society, be it of animals that were not yet men or of men that were still animals, before they could meet in the wilderness, withdraw from, conclude a contract with, or kill, each other. This society included an element different from fear, hunger, contract, power.

The first I, though continuing to look directly at the It of its desire, looks into the face of the second I, inquiring, asking, searching for response. Now a direct line leads from the first to the second I, and perhaps through the second I to the It. The first I can look at the It indirectly through the second I. When, and for whatever motives—motives still being irrelevant and specific relations the subject of inquiry—the first



I uses this capacity, he will learn and may recognize what this It is to the other I.

Now the first I has more than one 'perspective'. The It is no longer an It of an environment that is my own, referred to myself. There need not be reciprocity. The second I need not respond; he may continue to look at the It of his desire solely through his own eyes, clinging to his own perspective. In this way voluntary obedience comes to be, not society. When the second I reciprocates, the perspectives entwine in a specific manner. The It is what it is relative to both me and you. It has undergone a change. My arbitrary will protects it against yours; yours protects it against mine. Thus it establishes a nature relative to 'us'. For a time, to both me and you, this nature of the 'thing' seems to be its own 'objective' stubborn nature.

In this 'mutual response' the first and the second I too undergo a kind of change. The I is no longer merely an I. It has begun to become a You. Being-a-You will be even part of its being-an-I as it begins to be to itself a You of the second I.

Now only can society come to be, though even now it is not yet society. If this element of mutual response creeps into 'contract' and 'domination', the contract is no longer merely contract, the domination no longer merely domination. The relation of the first to the second I is not to be subordinated to the relation of the I to an It on which the needy I depends. The two relations are born together, cast in one and the same mold.

The bird builds a nest. She stores food for her offspring. In some way nest and food must be to the bird what they are, could be, and are meant to be to the offspring she feeds and protects—unless, of course, before we understand birdlife we strangle it in a so-called 'mechanism of instincts' without any evidence and without even being able to indicate what we intend these words to mean. Even in the life of the mother bird some 'it' must have a kind of being with respect to a kind of You.

A small child seems to discover 'things'. This is the viewpoint of adults who live in a world of established things. From



the child's viewpoint we would say that the child, playing with things, builds up his own little tentative and preliminary order in which he lets a still unknown thing be and mean this or that. He does this, however, certainly not in solitude but by observing what others do with these things. The mother knows and is not afraid. The thing is not to be feared.

We ourselves live in a world of objective things which are established in a nature of their own relative to a society or even to the generalized observer of science or pseudo science. Yet anyone can observe every day that he qualifies, though not the objective nature, at least the meanings and functions of things with respect to other human beings as well as to himself. The mother does not know but thinks she knows what a cow and a meadow objectively 'are'; yet she looks differently at this particular cow whose milk her children drink and at this meadow on which the cow grazes. This cow is a cow with respect to her children, this meadow a meadow with respect to the cow.

These are matters of course. Yet some consequences are rarely drawn. They reach very far.

I am trying to distinguish and qualify specific relations. These relations cannot be reduced to, or deduced from, one another. He who tries to base the origin of society on the sheer utility of co-operation in the relation of human beings to the things they need blurs the distinctions and maims man. He may achieve some semblance of deduction by resorting to 'motives'. The one is said to be the 'means', the other the 'end'.<sup>5</sup> Yet in human life ends can become means and means ends. The category of means and ends can be used every which way; therefore it usually says little. The broadness of human life testifies against the narrowness of a single purpose to which everything else is said to be merely a means. Human beings need one another, and not merely as tools. They need one another not only with respect to things; they need things with respect to one another.

It will not do to derive the relation between human beings or the genesis of society from a utility based upon man's dependence upon the things he needs. Even the Man of Thomas



Hobbes, loving himself and fearing death above all, cannot help referring himself to others. The vanity with which he seems to behave toward himself presupposes something he can try to seem, at least to others. He may throw a stone and be very proud of his strength. But the stone does not praise his vanity. This man, unsure of himself, feeds his vanity on what he is or seems to others. Vanity, however great its power, implies something else.



## *Chapter 2*

### I, YOU, AND IT

SUPPOSE the first and the second I are each a You to the other, thus related to each other directly and not merely through an It of desire; each will look at the It both through his own and through the eyes of the other. The It is A to me and B to you. Its being B to you will be part of it. It is no longer only A or only B. It is AB; as AB it is beyond being merely A or merely B and is stabilized against mine as well as against your arbitrary whim. It is neither my nor your but our It: one and the same thing to me and to you.

Again I seem to be saying matters of course. Though obvious, they are not quite as simple as they seem.<sup>6</sup>

When the two I's—I as your You, You as mine—deal for a time with any specific 'it' (in a specific manner still to be qualified but at any rate with respect to each other) each of the two I's will discover in the thing not only the share he conceded to his You in establishing the thing as 'our' thing but also his own share, conceded to himself by the You. Hence the I can have in the response of the You a part of himself as well as of the You. This is what talk between friends can do.

Thus the behavior of an I and a You to an It that is 'ours' contains the behavior of the I to the You, of the You to the I.



Both the I and the You give and take. What each gives and takes is part of each. Interest and power cannot establish a society without such taking that is giving, such giving that is taking, though even now society has not and cannot yet come to be. A scheme that allows only for the relation of two I's and one It is too poor.

In this give and take, what each of the two I's is to the other will become part of what each is to himself. Reluctantly, I call this element love. It is not yet friendship, let alone love. Both are great names which acquire and lose mutable meanings, sublime or petty, in the transient societies of man. What has so far occurred between the two I's is merely a kind of exchange of reciprocal aspects and perspectives in which the I, the You, and the It determine themselves as I, You, and It with respect to one another. This may be an ingredient indispensable to an eternal meaning of what we call friendship and love. It is not yet either friendship or love.

It is, however, not merely 'like' or 'equal' interest. Interests can be like without any contact between the persons whose interests are alike. Nor is it merely 'common' interest. Like interests become common interests as human beings co-operate in promoting their like interests. When an alliance between two partners, be they men or states, rests on nothing more than common interests, each partner continues to look at the object of interest merely with his own eyes. Only in the case of mutual interest does an interest of the partners in each other mingle with the interest of each in the object of interest.

The two I's too, not only the things, have a stubborn nature of their own. They remain obstinate beings though they refer themselves to each other. The thing of the I qualified as A is not only A; it remains an unknown AX, to be further qualified, capable of possible surprises. The AB of mutual response is still an ABX. The same holds for the first and second I. They may look into each other's eyes but whatever they discover points to something still unknown. Thus not only the thing but they themselves remain a source of possible surprise to each other—of fear, hope, curiosity, awe, and disappointment.

Such a still unknown nature of thing and man must remain



if a giving that is taking and a taking that is giving are to continue to be possible.<sup>7</sup> This giving and taking is searching. An I and a You seek in each other the still unknown things. In the things the I seeks the still unknown You. They may believe they have found what they were searching for, may cling to what they have found, and cease searching. But whatever they have found, nothing is the end. In each of us there is always something else.

By encouraging and rejoicing in the splendor of the stubborn individual some societies may have destroyed themselves. If, however, a future molder and master of masses broke the last remnant of obstinacy in the individual, the society would cease to be a society.

The exchange of aspects means not merely equality and solidarity of interests and opinions. Conformity is not integration, uniformity not unity, not even in the standardized mass society of our own ephemeral days.

In individual psychology the man-environment scheme takes the other man to be a mere datum of the environment of the subject under observation. But any I, confronting any 'it', is already a You of another I, though this other I may be absent or dead. The child is born an 'it' and will be a You to the mother ere it is an I. As a kind of You to an I, however transient, and an I to a kind of You, the mother conceived the child. Thus nature decided the controversy long before a science of man could begin with the relation of an isolated ego to an environment of mere objects.

When the relation of an ego to an It—interest, need, and their satisfaction—guides the inquiry, the 'You' will be means and tool of the ego for the It of his individual needs. A superstructure of culture is erected on the substructure of biological needs. Basic needs are sublimated. Material interests, common or conflicting, swallow up love and hate; the family of the caveman can be nothing but the co-operation of windowless beings to the end of providing food and shelter and satisfying a sexual urge. The You remains a stranger and the image of man a grimace. Now indeed no one can answer the question Engels kept on asking Marx: why did a superstruc-



ture of culture come to be everywhere and always on the basis of such a substructure?

A simple fact is forgotten: man, referring his environment to himself, refers himself to his environment. If there were no such environment, man, referring everything to himself, would remain a stranger to his world as well as to himself.

If this 'mutual response' is to found a society, it must be of a specific kind. What is it?

Sociology defines social action as action related to the behavior of others. Yet not every 'interaction' generates a society. Hatred too is interaction. It can even found an intimate relation between human beings. Two men hating each other depend upon each other. They silently exchange aspects. What happens to the thing? If you like it, that is reason enough for me to dislike it. It is B to you; it will be non-B to me. This exchange does not build up, it tears down the things. What happens to the I? I am not to myself what I am to you—a contemptible hateful being. What I am to you should not be part of what I am to myself or to others. I will not have it so.

The mutual response that generates a society is not the response of hatred. There each of the two I's, aware of the perspective of the other, will concede to the other and demand for himself some share in the qualification of the things and their meaning. Human beings are doing this everywhere and always in various ways, wittingly or unwittingly, willingly or unwillingly.

This is the third element. I call it love, though it is not yet love. Love presupposes this element. It is already present in pleasing, even in vanity.<sup>8</sup>

But the three elements together—interest, power, and love—do not suffice to make a society possible. A society is neither only an alliance of interest, an organization of power, a community of love, nor a conjunction of the three. It needs a fourth element which, however, cannot be identified on the basis of the meager scheme of two I's and one It.



## *Chapter 3*

### IDEA

FROM THE FIRST to the last man, men meet the power of things in their relations to one another, the power of other men in their relations to things. The You mixes into the relation of an I to an It; and It into the relation of the I to the You. The scheme of the two I's and one It is an abstraction, not only because these general I's and It's lack the singularity in which alone they are real. They are isolated as three inter-related elements within a context in which more elements are related to one another. Such isolation too is 'abstraction'.

The It is here the generalized object, standing for any single thing. There is, however, no such thing, particular or general. The single thing is never alone. It is somewhere, together with other things in a 'world' of men and things. A reference to other things and to this world is co-present in any single thing. Whenever in this process of mutual response a thing is stabilized as 'our' thing against both you and me, not only this single thing but a whole of an order must be conceived of or established, however roughly or tentatively. The single thing will have a preliminary place in such an order where the I, You, and all the other things also have such a place. The I, You, and It are not nowhere. They are in a world—the world of the I and You. No one ever meets a



single thing, a thing alone with itself. Anything whatsoever is half in shadow, surrounded by a penumbra in which other things, or actual and possible relations to other things, or other possible relations to ourselves or to other human beings, are vaguely perceptible. Any 'figure' we meet is a figure on a ground. We cannot separate the figure from its ground. On another ground the figure would not be entirely the same.

The figures on their ground are in motion. But the ground too may move—on another ground that stands still. In upholding the identity of a figure on a ground that moves we can only refer both to another ground that stands still.

I take the distinction between figure and ground from the psychology of sense-perception. The difficulty of understanding other beings implied in mutual response demands differentiation between two possible meanings of 'ground'. In the one this ground is thought of as being changeable, in the other of standing still.

When the first and the second I look at the thing 'under different aspects', the thing may be said to be seen against different other things and in different contexts. This is not the sense in which I speak of 'ground'. Adam sees in the skin of the bear he slew a coat he would like to wear; Eve a pleasant thing to sleep on. Yet in the different aspects, the skin is the same skin. Adam and Eve refer it to an order of all possible things; there it has a place as a bear skin. If this order only, and not merely the transient aspect of a moment, is called the ground, this ground is supposed to stand still. But not only the possible things, their qualities too, even their changing aspects, have a place in this order. Things are useful or harmful, good or bad, sacred or profane.

The lion who roars is near or far. Such distinctions belong to an order of all things, actual and possible. This order stands still while within its frame the things change their places.

A so-called first and second man cannot come to an 'understanding' about the thing unless they come to or have inherited the result of an understanding about much more than the particular thing. An 'understanding' comes to be not merely as an understanding about a first, a second, a third



thing—a sum of common opinions about an increasing sum of things. It comes to be on the basis of and with respect to a presupposed order of all possible things, though this order may be only tentative and not yet product of any conscious reflection.<sup>9</sup> This order of the 'world' and the definite thing come into being together. With respect to things, man discovers his world; with respect to his world he discovers the nature of his things—if 'world' be the name of this all-embracing order.

The kind of mutual response in which society becomes a society is not satisfied with referring a You to this or that thing. It refers this thing and the You and this reference to an order of all possible things—to the world that is 'ours'. In this process the members of a prospective society need by no means agree or have the 'same opinions' about single things. If they held and were sure of holding the same opinions about everything, they would have nothing to give to or to take from each other, and mutual response would starve to death. Society is real only as occurrence, never as a situation at rest; it cannot live without the unknown or without tension and surprise. Nevertheless, there must be agreement on a preliminary scheme of an order that as ground behind the changing figures stands still or is thought of as standing still. Against this ground the first and the second man may agree or disagree about the single thing. Without a minimum agreement about such a ground they could not even disagree—their aspects could not even meet.

But this ground is not simply there, given in advance. It has to be discovered and established just as the things do and together with the things. It shows itself in the things, in your aspect and in mine. To it we refer the things and the diversity of their mutable aspects in mutual response. Even if this ground behind all the figures seems to be inherited as something that is 'given', it must be and is every moment re-established, reconfirmed, rediscovered.

The process in which the things and the world are established as our things and our world is formation as well as discovery. Both the things and their order are stubborn—they



answer Yes and No to our desires and opinions. We say: the things and their order 'exist'. They are interpreted by man. They are not our work. Their existence is independent of us. We thereby acknowledge the stubbornness of their nature but we do not yet know this nature except in the way it shows itself to us. Thus the things and their order lend themselves to neither one single nor any and every interpretation. Were only one interpretation possible, there would be only discovery, no formation; were each and every interpretation possible, there would be only formation, no discovery. The things are multivalent—hence there is both formation and discovery.

We see the same things under changing aspects in which the thing is referred now to this, now to that. A piece of meat is now something I shall eat today, now something I may feed my dog tomorrow. At any moment there are countless such aspects. They are partial aspects, thought of as changeable. Any such aspect contains references to possible other aspects and points beyond itself. These changing aspects, which become visible in a mutable penumbra of other things and references, do not put the figure on a solid ground. There is, however, another kind of aspect and the other meaning of 'ground'. Ground can be an ultimate ground. It does not move. Even if it moved, it would be assumed not to move. Moreover, there is only one such 'ultimate' ground—one and the same for all possible things. It is the order of that whole 'in' which the first and the second man, the one thing and all the others, the actual and the possible, and all their mutable aspects are thought to be. The first and the second man, provided they begin to found a society, do not seek each other in seeking the thing; they seek the thing in seeking each other; in the thing and in each other they seek the 'world', the whole whose order holds and embraces them and all the things. This search too is both formation and discovery. We find and interpret, posit and qualify.

The ultimate 'ground' does not become manifest in everything in the same way and degree. Many things are dim and



indistinct in the fog. But night and day alternate. Sun, moon, and stars move along the vault of the sky. This vault is one and stands still. The now of time marches on; one time orders all the births and deaths in a single file of before, inbetween, and after. Space, the vessel of all vessels, the only one that no one can carry away,<sup>10</sup> lets the things be short or tall, slim or fat, above or below, near or remote—an eternal order, immutable, though in it the things move. There is, of course, not only Space and Time, and this Space and Time are not yet the space and time of 'objective' science. Many more and things of an entirely different kind are thought of as belonging to that order of the whole, become manifest in this or that thing, or are revealed as power moving the soul of man. When things are called 'sacred' or 'profane', the distinction made by society stands still. What does it distinguish? Whereas the profane things change their aspects in the course of daily needs, miseries, or interests, and now this, now that other, single thing becomes visible in their penumbra—no aspect being the sole and ultimate one—the sacred tree or the sacred animal makes a different claim.

The holy animal and the holy tree too are single things. The ground against which this single thing is a figure, however, is not one of its mutable aspects. It is part of a 'horizon' that embraces the world in which we are together with all the actual and possible things. As this horizon becomes visible, the tree or the animal becomes 'holy'. This horizon is an ultimate horizon. There are no others behind it. It rings the world. Hence the horizon is one and the same for all things. East, west, south, north—there is one horizon all around. It may be covered with loitering clouds; here and there only a part of it can be seen, yet it is posited as ultimate, unique, all-embracing. Man reaches out for this horizon. Whenever he can, he refers himself and the things to the whole of an order in which he is. If he loses it, all horizons become mere aspects. Its lack accompanies him as a need. He cannot bear it and falls victim to the first ideology offered as a substitute by a seducer of men.



These remarks seem to skirt the edge of the difficult though essential task of formulating a social theory of knowledge. But such is not my intention. I merely seek that exchange of aspects in which society comes to be as society, that society which must already exist or have existed ere the first man could make a contract with the second man or enslave him.



## *Chapter 4*

# THE CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS IN THEIR INTERACTION

**T**HE FIRST I puts a question to and gets an answer from the second I. The answer may in turn entail a question requiring an answer. The question seeks the You with respect to the thing, the thing with respect to the You. It seeks the thing with respect to several other things and behind the things an order of all things in which this thing may find its place.

The exchange of aspects is mutual response of an I as You to a You as an I with respect to the thing, to the place of the thing in the order of all things, to this order itself, the world, which reveals or hides itself in this thing and should be your world as mine, mine as yours, and hence 'our' world. We may quarrel over whether this particular thing is wholesome or poisonous, good or bad. We do not yet know its nature. We are aware of each other's doubts, yet we agree on an order that distinguishes wholesome from poisonous things. Even when quarreling about the thing, each confirms this distinction to the other. In mutual response a scheme of that order comes to be. We outline its design. In its frame we order and interpret the things. It will become our major premise.

This or that thing may flicker. Yet behind it curves a sky,



which though but dimly visible does not flicker. We seek its horizon. Our questions and answers seem to touch it if only from a distance. The prison of the ego is no longer windowless. I and you are together in one and the same world. This world becomes ours when such a horizon echoes my question and your answer. In this moment society comes to be a society and begins to develop what we call a 'culture'. This order, though beginning as a preliminary and doubtful scheme, becomes stabilized. In it the things stand firm. The firmness of the things sustains it.

The I no longer faces merely the You—my aspect confronted with Yours, I know not where. I face You within a We—in the world of a We. 'We' is often used loosely as if it were a sum of two or more I's. Sometimes we give it a more emphatic meaning in which a mere sum is not yet a We. At a certain moment in the relation between two human beings the We begins to be more than a mere sum.<sup>11</sup> We might say that this is the moment when the first I becomes a You to the second, the second I a You to the first. We would, however, merely be hiding the secret of the We in the still unexplained secret of the You. We might as well say that the You becomes a You the moment the We ceases to be a mere sum. We would better say: at a certain moment I and You—in their response to each other's aspect—become aware of, and acknowledge, an aspect of the We as We, distinct from mine as mine and yours as yours, thereby looking at the thing, or feeling or thinking, with the eyes of, or in the name of, a 'We'—as 'members of a group'. This happens when and only when the thing and our aspects of it are referred, however vaguely, to an order we divine, assume, presuppose, and a part of a horizon becomes visible which is or promises to become the horizon of the world that will be ours. If the things in your and my perspective and both perspectives as well, whether in agreement or not, include such a reference, the We will be truly a We.<sup>12</sup>

This emphatic We reaches out beyond the ambiguous thing and its changing aspects for a kind of 'horizon'. When we are sure of this horizon, we can become sure not only of the



thing but also of each other and can hope to remain sure of each other—through the various disagreements and little lies and disappointments of the day. Though each may continue to move in its own way, we move at least in the same space, climate, or landscape of the 'soul'.

There are no longer only two aspects, mine and yours, confronting each other. In a third, 'ours', which is neither mine nor yours nor a sum of the two, the thing is a figure, seen against a ground—the order of 'our' world.

But why not plainly say that 'our' thing means merely all such traits or properties we agreed about, constituting the  $x$  to which we refer our individual aspects? For a simple reason. Though this ordinary way of speaking may almost suffice as long as the I and You remain alone, it will not suffice when this I and You begin to increase the population of the group. And this they will certainly do.

It is better not to wait for this increase, but to provide for the difference already in the model of mutual response of an I to a You. The I takes on the role not only of the You. It can take on the role of the We. It can pretend to do so or imagine it does so and oppose the You in the name of the We or complain that the other I is looking at the thing merely through his own eyes. That happens every day, even between only two individuals whenever they begin to say 'We' in an emphatic sense. It probably happened already between the first caveman and the first cavewoman.

The I and the You are not alone. Their isolation is no less an abstraction than the isolation of the single thing. They are already men among men. The two I's who are You to each other are a He or She to other men. They may be in a We that is the We not only of the I and the You. Within this wider We, I and You call the indefinite others who look, opine, and judge 'they'. This wider We reaches backward and forward in time—it can embrace both the dead and the unborn. In saying 'We', we can include them. Their alleged aspect can be co-present. The generations come and go. The We, the same yet not the same, persists. Nevertheless, this We



is a We only if and as far as there are some I's who in the name of the We feel, think, talk to a You, care and act.

Mutual response has undergone a change. It no longer occurs merely between an I and a You, even when they talk about a thing. The two are aware that this thing is something for these or those, for him or her, for 'them', the others, for 'public opinion', for the wider We in which they are an I and a You and in whose name somebody—a government, king, or priest—is entitled or takes it upon himself to speak. Now the I, with or without his You, stands against others within the We or even against the We, yields or resists, bows or revolts; the I within the We, against the We, in the name of the We against You or him—in possible tensions and conflicts, manifold in kind and countless in number.

What is it that persists as one and the same in the change of individuals who are born and die, in all the smaller futile We's that join and separate again, in all this exchange of changeable aspects of mutable things, in agreement and disagreement between me and You, him and her, the They and the We? And if no one and nothing persists as the same, what is it by virtue of which we treat this multifarious and complex compound of occurrences of response as a unity—the unity of a society, be it a family or a nation?

It is the unity of a reference to the unity of a 'ground' against which the figures move as figures. This 'ground' is the whole of an order of all possible things—the scheme, final or preliminary, of a world as a whole in which we and our things together are and have their place. Not that this 'world' need stand still absolutely and in every respect. We may be aware that the world in which we move, our world, moves while we move. This awareness is the origin of historical consciousness. The world too, not only the things in it, can have a history, though even in this case we tacitly presuppose of necessity some hidden principles of order at the bottom of this history.

There is always—at every moment in all our thinking—a ground which, relative to the rapidly moving figures, stands still or is assumed to stand still. What must be preserved if a society is to maintain its identity with itself is the unity of this



ground and our reference to it. Lest that be lost, this ground must be conceived of as standing still at least to some degree and for a while. My and your, our and their questions and answers must be able to reverberate from the horizon of this world; their resonance must continue to reach me and you—our and their responses must be able to refer the changing things and their flickering aspects as before to the same ground as our and their questions. In this common reference to an intentional identity, which is posited as unity, this scheme of the world, guiding possible experience, comes to be, is established, upheld, revised, and confirmed.

The stubborn nature of the things, which have found their place in it, confirms it. In the exchange of aspects and the mutual awareness of reciprocal perspectives the We comes to be 'society', as a universe of mutual response, questions and answers, care, need, and work in the same 'world'. When the unity of this ground breaks asunder, things lose their place, words their meaning. My questions and your answers die away in empty space. Finally, the universe of response splits and new societies struggle to life, reorganizing the fragments.

This ground does not simply come to be, then be maintained in mutual response. It is forever being searched for, found, and lost; it seems to vanish and is rediscovered and re-vivified. It is modified, yet remains one and the same in a continuous reference of both memory and expectation to the unity of a world.

Now and then the old complain that their children no longer live in the same world. They miss the response to their answers and questions. The young have their corresponding complaints. Yet it is still the same world and the same We as long as both young and old still seek some response to their responses and presuppose what they are seeking, even were it only some expectation corresponding to the memory of the old, some memory corresponding to the expectation of the young.<sup>13</sup>

This holds not only for the family or the tribe. Historical peoples and nations in the course of the centuries go on presupposing their identity with themselves, which at any mo-



ment they maintain and lose, rediscover and recapture in the interplay of memory and expectation.

Society is occurrence, not situation. It is the unity of a 'process'. In this process man, thing, and world converse. Man's response to the world is response to man and thing; man's response to man and thing is response to the world. Man responds to man with respect to things; he responds to things with respect to man.

This process of response is not a mere sum or series of responses. The single responses are parts of a unity. The mutual aspects and reciprocal perspectives are referred to a finite universe, the universe of the group. Thus a world is formed in the world and, changing, preserves its unity. The unity of this world and the unity of the society sustain each other. Hence the age-old ambiguity of the term 'world' as *mundus hominum* and *mundus rerum*. The whole which embraces us as ours is both the one and the other: the narrower or wider We and the order of the things and their meanings as interpreted by this We. The world of our things is at once the world of our men; the world of our men the world of our things—as long as we claim to call things and men 'our' things and 'our' men.

A society is 'ours'; we are its members; we 'belong' to it—as far as we hear and are heard, participating in the mutual response and the awareness of perspectives—provided we long for and listen to the resonance of our and their speaking and acting from a sky whose horizon encompasses and confines our world. If there is not this mutual response and resonance, we are, however much honored, strangers, tolerated for a while. We can become strangers in our own society. Another society can become ours, though in such a case many are too quick to say 'we', 'us', 'our' village or navy, yet remain in some eyes strangers longer than they know, even if they have married into a family clan or immigrated to the United States of America—of all countries the most generous to strangers.

With any We, a You and a They come to be—on the small scale of friends or lovers and on the large scale of peoples, religions, or cultures.



The 'world' I speak of orders not merely things. It orders men and things. Men need not yet separate and in many cases may not distinguish what we today differentiate as social norms from laws of nature and are accustomed and compelled to refer to different orders. Our complex society consists of many sub- and coordinated narrower or wider We's which bestow meanings on our things. The nature of these things is established relatively to a scientific or pseudo-scientific 'anybody'.

Before this world of objects of a generalized observer comes to be, the society hangs its social norms, its good and bad, sacred and profane on the order of plants, animals, and stars, ties them to powers, demons, or gods that sway the world of men and things, past, present, and future. Upon their order the legislator tries to fasten the laws he gives, the powerholder the claims he makes, the society any authority it recognizes in a natural process of formation in which a society and its world grows through and with respect to each other.

Thus a fourth element joins interest, power, and the love that is not yet love, and interacts with their interaction: the 'idea'. The choice of this word, as of love, demands justification. Both are borrowed names whose present connotations are disregarded. The love I refer to is not what present-day man calls love, now in this, now in that, but mostly in loose usage. First of all, it is not Christian love. It is not altruism. It means both more and less. It is intended to mean something quite simple and nothing else.

The thing of mere interest is an 'object' and is referred to a subject. In 'power' based upon violence the other man becomes a tool, an It for some thing. The third element, called love, aims at more than interest and power. Here the other I is subject, an actual or potential You—of response, concern, care.

The I, referring a potential You to himself, refers himself to the You. Man accepts what he is to others as part of his own being. He does this more or less though he may not yet call it by any name at all or recognize it as the still quite modest precondition of something that later, in certain cir-



cumstances, he will call amity, friendship, or love. Were this modest love not a possibility of man, society would not have come to be; the man of Thomas Hobbes would still roam the woods, a bundle of appetites, killing in order not to be killed, strangled by a vainglory he cannot use. For vanity too entails the element of love. Before human beings can sustain their images of themselves by their images of one another and enjoy their vanity, they must be able and desire to refer themselves to one another.

Human beings are not things to one another; they have an 'interest' in one another which, however, is not always mere 'interest'—the one-way reference of the thing of need and desire to man. Man, in conversing with thing and world, referring himself to another man who responds, needs this reference no less than the air he breathes, the water he drinks, the food he eats. His conversing with thing and world is give and take. This give and take is life. This love, being not yet love, is a kind of relation that already bound Adam to Eve, the first caveman to the first cavewoman, the mother to her child. It binds, at least as a latent potentiality of response, one Frenchman to any other Frenchman, though it may bind this Frenchman to that Englishman whenever in an hour of mutual response a bit of sky becomes visible.

The term 'idea' does not mean any idea that we, in loose usage, choose to call an idea. And it too denotes something quite simple. Idea is aspect, view. Not any thought or opinion about this or that is an 'idea'. An idea is a synoptic view—a unity encompassing a multiplicity. Idea, as the name of the fourth element, refers the single thing to the whole of an order. Man's ideas search, reach out for, pretend to grasp an ultimate horizon that confines the world in which we live. Hence there are so many confused, fuzzy, alleged ideas. In this sense of the term even the first caveman had 'ideas' though they may have been feelings rather than thoughts.

Whereas man's 'interest' is concerned with the single things on which he depends, his ideas refer to the whole in which he is. This usage of the term is opposed to our loose way of talking—we say we are 'interested' in God and have 'ideas' about



the stock market. We have an interest in the temple fees or the sale of candles, not in God, but merely thoughts about tomorrow's stock market, though social reformers may have ideas about the role of the stock market in social life.

Society as occurrence, at any moment both coming to be and passing on, in a thousand ways interknits these four: interest, power, love, and idea.<sup>14</sup> They struggle, conquer a share in one another, and change as they mingle. Each seems now cause, now effect, now means to, now end of, the other. Love permeates interest. Associations of interests grow into communities of friends. Interest pervades love. Friendships become partnerships. In one another grow, on one another feed, interest and friendship. Ideas crystallize around interests. Nowhere is there a permanent order of priority—in time or in rank. Ideas also determine interests. Power too interferes in many forms, masks, shades; it has always interfered. It stabilizes ideas; with their help it supports itself. It comes to be within love and within interest. Within power itself love and interest assert themselves; the serf can be interested in the power of the master who protects and feeds him; even the master, seeking consent to his power, can care for the serf. Thus the four, though forever at odds, need one another. Together only and with respect to one another do they sway social life, agreeing and disagreeing with one another, in concord and discord.

In the social reality the four are enmeshed in one another. We cannot isolate any one of the four from the others. They must be distinguished, however; none can be reduced to any of the others as effect, manifestation, sublimation, or in any other way.

It is a vice of our usual thinking to assume that an occurrence, preceding in time as cause, can answer the why of another occurrence called effect. Much else is needed before a preceding event can be the cause of a succeeding event—laws, a dynamic field, forces which we presuppose when we connect one event as cause with another as effect. We inquire into these. The field of force contains, even in the case of a hungry man, more than his hunger. In any situation, each of



these four is present, manifest or hidden. No one is prior to any other. One fabric interweaves interest, power, love, and idea. Men need bread; they help one another harvest, constrain one another into their service, enjoy one another, sing and dance in honor of the gods, embrace one another, and pray. Life is one only. As one, it refers back and forth the presence and absence of all these four or whatever the changing names of their equivalents may be.



## Chapter 5

# THE SOCIAL SITUATION

**T**O A SOCIETY of this kind, every first or second, penultimate or last man already belonged before they could meet for the first time in the wilderness of mankind's beginning or end. This society, however, is not a first society in time but a model of a logically first and logically last society, as frame of social life. Hence, it is not family, tribe, people, nation, companionship of friends, church-community, or whatever else. It is not a group. Any specific group can be such a society; none need be. Any specific group can be more or less deficient as a society, fulfilling its functions only partly or not at all. Then its deficiency accompanies it as lack, need, or desire, and is part of the living reality.

What is the use of such a model? Is it not an idle abstraction? The *societas universalis speculativa*, the 'idea' of society?

In his metamorphosis of the plants Goethe envisages the unity of a formative principle which he calls the *Urpflanze*. Out of this *Urpflanze* he sees evolving the varieties of plants and the variations of their forms in all their infinite diversity. The realm of human societies is neither less variegated nor more easy to order and articulate. Starting from the unity of a formative principle we might eventually be able to unfold the inexhaustible variety of groups, forms, shapes, and com-



pounds of groups which in, after, beside, beneath, and above one another order themselves in chains and rows and circles as if they were stems and branches and stalks and umbels. We know infinitely more about society than about plants. Groups conjoin and disjoin in response to the changing purposes of human seriousness and play, need and desire and idea; form, transform, reform, and deform, harden, get rigid and flexible again, and dissolve to begin anew. They are more mutable than any plant. Yet in each new grouping, and under the cloak of ever-different names, they too may reveal and conceal the eternal sameness of a primeval rule—nature herself silently at work in the confused noise of restless society.

Whatever we may think about anticipating such knowledge I dream no such dream in the scope of this inquiry, nor do I yearn for any such dream. The model is not a model of an original society. It is not a model of any social group that is thought to have existed at some time or other. Like the man-environment scheme, it is the scheme of a relational structure. As a scheme it is an abstraction. However, it is a unity, and as such forbids the kind of abstraction that isolates constituents, which are only in relation to one another, as if they were entities that could exist separately. In this unity the I as I, the You as You, the We as We, the thing as thing, the world as world are interrelated. Each of these relata is co-present with every other, visible or not, in the mode of having or lacking, as the relations that define the relata are co-present in one another. If there is no You that could be a You to me, the reference to its absence is still part of the living actuality. The scheme of this relational structure is but a frame. Within this frame hunger and satiety happen amid ideas; love and hate amid hunger, satiety, and ideas; ideas come to be and fade amid want and plenty, love and hate—of necessity.

The relational structure is unity, not multiplicity. The unity is folded up in itself in many folds; yet it is preserved as unity. The joints are joints, not pieces. In the unity of the whole, each is what it is to the others and together with the others.

Within this frame a society lives and passes away; within it 'world' originates, changes, and dissolves—from the first to



the last day of man. In it the I is by nature a potential You, a He or a She, part of a We, looking at a You and squinting at the others who, as They, think and feel and talk. In it the stubborn I quarrels with the You or the We; the We fights with a You—for bread, power, a god, or for some kind of love. By nature's necessity, within this frame an equivalent of honor will come to be, whatever its name—prestige, glory, public opinion, tradition, revered or challenged, custom, respected or disregarded, law and authority, recognized or defied. Within it power, though stemming from violence, is not only my power over you, the tool of my needs and appetites but power of a We over me and you, usurped or acknowledged, executed by him or them; now the We in whose name the master rules or pretends to rule can include or pretend to include the serf; domination can become or seem to become care for the serf, servitude devotion to the master.

Within this frame the need for ordered action brings the State into being.<sup>15</sup> The State may be or behave as the instrument of society for definite purposes. Society may try to control it. It tends to develop a life of its own which a permanence of purposes justifies. As an organization of power it becomes an instrument of powerholders who subject the universe of response, the spontaneous culture, to their own needs or cupidity and try to create or regulate the society they desire or need—in all sorts of concord and discord between Society and State, in tensions and conflicts, unsolvable and solved, postponed, patched up, mended and compromised, infinite in kind and number.

This inquiry, however, searches only for the frame no change can change, not for the diversity of societies, their cultures and states. The frame itself will last as long as man, the finite being, wrestling with the stubbornness of men and things, continues to form, transform, reform, and tear down his little worlds of men and things.

The model I seek is a human model.



## *Chapter 6*

# SITUATION AS OCCURRENCE

**T**O POSIT such a relational structure is merely to formulate a preliminary hypothesis. Like any hypothesis, it is expected to break down when confronted with phenomena it cannot cover. The only confirmation it can hope for is the richness of concrete life it can cover. Its particular formulation is tentative; it is to be modified, revised, elaborated, refined.

In the language of the social sciences this relational structure would be called the universal pattern of 'the social situation', replacing the man-environment scheme. This universal pattern is still meager, though no longer as meager as it was.

The term 'social situation' can be misunderstood in different ways. It does not mean a particular situation of a society. Any situation whatsoever is a social situation—that of the hermit included. The 'existential' situation itself is a social situation. Furthermore, it is not the situation of a moment. It is the situation underlying all situations of all moments. It 'is'; it does not come to be. It is the fundamental context within which all situations change.

The word 'situation', however, should not mislead us into disregarding time and forcing to a standstill what exists only as movement. To preclude any such static interpretation I



finally try to spell out the context in terms of motion. Situation is occurrence. The unity of the relational fabric which, under the aspect of the situation, relates constituent elements to one another, conjoins, under the aspect of occurrence, steps that can and must be distinguished.

In rendering 'situation' by 'movement' I aim at the same contextual unity. I change only the aspect. What as the aspect of the situation seems to stand still begins to move when looked at as a process in time. The constituents of the situation become steps of a development in time. In changing the aspect, however, I cannot help using for a moment an unfamiliar and abstract language.

Man, thrown into being and abandoned, a finite One, confronts an 'otherness' that is not he himself. Together with an indefinite otherness the One comes into being as a this One, A, not non-A. As a this One the One struggles to maintain itself against the indefinite otherness. This otherness is otherness by being other than the One—non-A. Yet there is more than one sense of 'other'. This is the first sense, corresponding to the first step.

This non-A is not nothing.<sup>16</sup> It is something, though qualified only negatively—by the exclusion of A, and A alone, from the non-A. The non-A is determined by negating the A. Thus the non-A is something, still unknown, not yet determined as a thing, susceptible to qualification in any way except as A—*aliud quid*. Yet it 'is'.

It is different from the One, Man, the I. Since it is determined solely by negating the A, the I, which is still alone to face this otherness, looks into the night of its indefiniteness, without support, in anxiety or terror. The new-born infant opens its eyes and cries. Even the adult may, in the flicker of an instant, meet this first otherness—alone in fog, snow, or ice, in the pitiless night or in the burning city, or anywhere else. As the instant passes, man may know or think he knows what the other thing is. This first otherness gets its power from being indefinite. It is inaccessible. It may be anything. Man is defenseless against it. It eludes thought and action.

Man, however, the finite One, is in need of something, of



another thing of a definite kind. He is hungry. The infant reaches for the breast of its mother. I bite into an apple. The breast, the apple is something, an otherness of a second kind. The meaning of 'other' has undergone a change. A step has been taken. The apple is a definite 'this'. As I desire it, it becomes another-thing-to-me. I consume it; it is no longer. Any object of need, desire, use, consumption is such another-thing-to-me, distinct in its kind, definite, an *alterum*. I digest the apple and evacuate the waste. It is an *aliud*, yet a definite thing, nothing-to-me.

This second otherness, the result of the second step, is the otherness of the definite things. I believe I know them. I have identified such a thing as this or that of such a kind. It may be an object of fear or disgust. It is no longer the indefinite, something of terror or anguish, nameless. Yet the second otherness conserves the first; its things still stand against the ground of the darkness from which they emerged into the light. They are still frail, and with them the One, the I to whom they are others. The first otherness has merely receded.

A third step is taken. Again the meaning of otherness changes; a third otherness comes into being. In the second step the other thing became only a this, a definite other-thing-to-me, the One. This other thing was determined and qualified merely by its being-to-me. I was nothing to it. In the third step, however, I myself shall become another-to-the-other, yet remain the One I am. Myself, this One, being another, will be another to another One who has the power to bestow upon me a being-to-him. He is my other one; I am his. This other one may be my friend, my wife, my child, my horse, my dog, or whatever else could conceivably be a You to me. In this emergence of a You, however deficient, an *aliud quid* turns into an alter ego. This alter ego is a One like myself and sustains its identity with itself in, for, against me. It is a You as an I—to it I shall be an I as a You.

The second otherness persists in the third. The *alter ego* forever hides an inaccessible *aliud quid*. In the second otherness the first persists, yet neither the second nor the first remains the same when in communion with the third. Now the



things of desire, delight, disgust, or indifference are my as well as your things. Their distinctness as these things is sustained; they continue to play in the same light. They still stand against the darkness around them. Yet this darkness can no longer engulf them. Though this darkness, the darkness of indefinite otherness, is still there, it is now your night as well as mine. Clinging to each other we shall be able to face it.

The third step includes a fourth—a new kind of otherness has come into being: the We. Its otherness is of neither the second nor the third kind. It is still, like the You, another one to me. I am still, as a single being, another kind of being to it. Yet I no longer merely confront it, nor does it merely confront me. I am in the We. The 'in' emerges.

I belong to the We as a kind of part to a kind of whole. As I am 'in' the whole, the whole is 'in' me. It is outside—in all the others who, like myself, are parts of the We. Yet in the same manner it is in me. Thus it is and is not me; it is another thing to me. Yet being in it I am in myself. In this fourth kind of otherness the third otherness, the otherness of the You, has again undergone a change. Together with You I am 'in' the We. It is 'our' We. The second otherness too has undergone another change. My things and yours are our things. The We holds them firmly. It interprets them. In their meaning it stabilizes itself.

Yet this fourth otherness remains precarious. There is still the first otherness; though in the background, it is there. There is still the unknown, in and behind the familiar thing, even in the darkness of my soul or of yours, even in the We, that may change and break up and be suddenly alien to me, estranged, no longer mine; it may cease to respond to or even reject me.

In the fourth step a fifth is about to be taken. The We, determining and ordering the things, builds a 'world'. The We, a limited group of human beings, reaches out beyond itself to the ends of the sky. The world to be built is not merely the totality of my and your and our things; it must encompass all things and force into its order the known and the unknown, the familiar and the unfamiliar, the actual and



the possible, the manifest, the hidden, the secret things—it claims to embrace whatever is. Embracing me, embraced by me, the world, conceived of as an ultimate order, is a fifth kind of otherness that finally establishes and protects and supports the fourth, third, and second othernesses and bars the first, as the boundaries of a world echo my questions and your answers. Now only is the ‘occurrence’, meant to spell out the fundamental structure of life, complete.

But even this world is never entirely what it claims to be. Though mine, yours, ours, it is not ‘the’ world. It too remains precarious. We have it and can lose it. It may become too wide, the order we posit may no longer be able to embrace the whole. It may prove to be too narrow; an unknown, unknowable, alien something may infringe upon the established order. In the gaps and rifts of its order the indefinite otherness, inaccessible, still lurks; it breaks into the established order, be it as a nature we do not understand, be it as a new and terrible god.

This attempt to spell out the ‘situation’ as occurrence may easily be misunderstood, and not only for reasons of language such perverted thinking is bound to encounter in any tongue, though perhaps in none more than the English. It might suggest that the different steps, following one another in time, try to describe a one-way temporal sequence: the growth of a human society. However, more is intended. The one way is not a one way in time. Societies decay as well as grow. Hence I could spell out as well, perhaps more convincingly, the fundamental occurrence in the reverse order: lead man from the well-established whole of the world he thinks is his to the terror of a lonely One, facing in anguish the night of an absolute otherness—through the breaking up of the unity, first of his world, then of his We, talk becoming senseless, words empty, any sky, the We, the You receding, the I losing his things and finally becoming a stranger to himself.

The one way entails the other. Not only social life, even individual life in its finiteness, goes both ways—mixing many times the joy of the one into the misery of the other. The ‘occurrence’, whether articulated as growth or as decay, aims



at the context within whose fabric both growth and decay occur. Situation and occurrence are both aspects of a relational structure, and as aspects, complement each other. They are equivalents. The 'elements' that constitute the situation are steps that articulate the occurrence.

The context is a unity, not a multiplicity. The multitude of elements, the diversity of steps 'are' only within the unity—each step, each element is real only with its others. The context as a whole is present in each. By virtue of this unity the element or step that seems to be absent in this or that situation or occurrence is silently present—the presence of its absence is part of the concrete reality.

This queer language is intended to indicate first, that the social reality denoted by such terms as social situation, fundamental pattern, does not mean a situation or a pattern of the contemporaneous at a definite time; second, that the contextual unity is prior to a multiplicity of both beings in space and events in time. Beyond these two purposes it has a philosophical function which I shall try to justify at the end of these inquiries, though it leads far beyond their limited scope.

I abandon this language and continue to speak of constituent elements of the fundamental context of social life.







## PART THREE

### *The General Frame*

*In a second step of this inquiry into the human reality I start again from the problem of the priority of the 'context' over the 'elements' this context interrelates. The man-environment scheme is prior to its elements. The inquiry into the genesis of society did not have any purpose other than to replace it by a less crude and empty model of a context in which I, You, We, the thing, and the world are referred to one another in interrelated relations. This relational structure persists as the fundamental pattern of 'society' throughout all the infinite variations of social life. Every day it is new and old.*

*If we look at the context under the aspect suggested by the term 'situation', its constituents are elements or factors of the social situation. Under the aspect of a process the elements of the situation become carriers of functions in an occurrence, to be differentiated and identified by the role they play in the process of life. Under the one and the other aspect the context claims priority. This claim is easily forgotten. We observe social life as it occurs or seems to occur in an already existing world of human beings, groups, and things. Thus we conceive of these elements as separate entities among others in an already given world in which they stand in mutable relations to one another. Nothing seems more natural.*



*Certainly this man here and that thing there exist independently of each other, as separate and separable facts in the world of the observer. But I am not speaking about this man and that thing. Before this man and that thing could be set apart in the world of an observer, man and thing were bound to each other, both in the act of observation and in the matter observed, referred to each other in the relational context of an occurrence we would call Life, were it not a biological term. Within the frame of this unity the observing and the observed occur. Even the act of observation presupposes the priority of the context.*

*It is, therefore, misleading although natural for the observer to think of social life as coming to be and passing away in a given world of objects. Objects become objects in the social life of subjects whose objects they are. Men become men with respect to one another. World becomes world as a world of man, as man becomes man as a man of a world.*

*Man, thing, world are not different entities that are brought into relationship to one another after having been already man, thing, and world, each alone for itself. When John dies and Jack grows up, when this group dissolves and another comes to be, when the things and the horizons of the world change, these and all other changes occur within the context of a relational unity of Man, Thing, and World.*

*I shall try therefore in a second step of inquiry to make explicit this general context. Though inherent in all human reality, it is easily forgotten.*



## Chapter 1

# THING

WE STUMBLE against this dumb, mute thing; we are compelled to recognize that it 'is' and to let it be what it is—a rock, a stone, or a piece of wood. Its resistance was the first man's first experience. Yet the 'objective' thing was born much later. The first things were hardly things like our things. Our things are not the things of the first man; even ours may not be 'objective'.

The animals, certainly the lower ones, may not have 'things'. In the semidarkness of their dull feeling, they meet an It, *aliud quid*, an other than they, a changeable and different something of the moment—resisting, yielding, compelling. The world in which they live may be to them a world of noises, smells, colors, or other sensuous qualities, unknown and inaccessible to us. This restless variety may have an order of its own, different for each animal.

The things of even so-called 'primitive' man were not yet things of our 'thingness'. In a sense, difficult for us to understand, they were probably qualities, and some of these qualities were 'powers', a something confronting man, the same something in various things, and therefore the same power in the thing and its image.<sup>1</sup>

However that may be, our things are different. They are here, each an entity, a this or that identical with itself. Each



has one, and only one, place in space at any one time, a continuous existence in a longer or shorter but, in any case, continuous time. They have 'properties', some of which persist, others of which change; they have a nature of their own, partly known, partly unknown to us. The mere 'it' becomes a thing of this thingness in the genesis of human society.

The theory of knowledge asks how the subject reaches the object, or the perceiver the thing perceived. The subject is the generalized subject; the object the generalized object of knowledge. The theory of knowledge shows us, for instance, in one or the other of many controversial terminologies, how something called mind, intellect, reason, thought, consciousness, transcendental subject, ego, self, or the like, refers the various data of the different senses at different times to an X as point of reference by virtue of perceived regularities or guided by rules of order this subject presupposes or assumes, revises, and finally accepts as confirmed.

In any case, the thing is posited as an X to which perceptions, aspects, and properties are referred as perceptions, aspects, and properties of something. This thing itself is neither perception nor aspect, neither property nor a sum of properties: it remains an X preliminarily qualified, to be further determined, the unity of a focus of actual and possible, remembered and expected perceptions. It is something—an entity—another to ourselves, an objectum, set against us, thrown into our path. It is there: it yields to or resists our action.

But the 'real' man is not the generalized subject of the theory of knowledge. He is a man among other men. The members of the general class 'man' are not isolated individuals. It is not the I alone that makes an It grow into a thing, establishing its identity and a distinct nature of its own. Long before the ambiguous something became a determinate thing, the You raised its voice. As my care for you blends into my care for myself, the It is what it is no longer only with reference to me. Responding to you I take on your role; listening to me you take on mine. Now the perceptions of the various senses yesterday and today, one aspect from this place and



another from that, as well as your perspective which I have felt or learned from your words and gestures, are gathered around the thing of your and my acting, suffering, searching, avoiding, desiring, and shunning. The It is no longer merely my it. It would scarcely have been established as a thing without your care and mine. The We finally stabilizes the thing against the arbitrariness, timidity, fear, and levity of the fickle I. The stabilized thing sustains the We against the I.

The It has grown into 'our' thing. It is established—the this—one of a We. It seems to have taken one step on the long road to 'objectivity' which it will never travel to the end as long as it is merely a thing. In using the term 'objective' we should ask against what kind of subjectivity the alleged objectivity is objective. This first objectivity is the intersubjectivity of a We. Only against the subjectivity of the individual I or You can it claim to be objective.

Yet even this first objectivity, incidentally, would scarcely come to be without a certain amount of honesty of man, toward both other men and the thing. Human beings must listen to one another and honestly tell one another their opinions. Moreover, they must listen to the voice of the thing itself with some kind of respect and let it be what it is or pretends to be—yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

If the genesis of this first kind of objectivity is a part of the so-called process of 'integration' of the group this integration presupposes a bit of integrity, however small. The first objectivity of the thing is subjectivity of the We. The established thing is surrounded by shadows of possibilities of use, memories and expectations, meanings and roles, likes and dislikes, which are property of the We. By virtue of these shadows the thing reaches in its silent way from the past into the future of the group. The meaning for the group and the nature of the thing itself are still blended.<sup>2</sup>

The things of primitive man may have been rich. Some of their richness stems from man, from the fullness of their reference to life; they were the things of man in a way quite different from our things. Another part they acquired through the familiarity of these men with the specific qualities of indi-



vidual things—from a closeness of these men to their things that is unknown to us. These men observed the individual particularity of the things they lived with, asked questions and interpreted signs, divined what the things concealed and respected what they revealed. In this way, Noah discovered wine.

The thing, though a thing of a We, is still 'otherness'. It reaches into the unknown. It is, yet is not, our thing. However, the thing 'is'. We posit its existence as 'absolute', objective, independent of ourselves. Only its suchness do we describe relatively to ourselves. We are not free to deny that it is. There is a something, an other, facing us. It does not owe its existence to our mind. Its absolute what and how elude us. Only in its relation to us does the thing disclose a nature of its own. It can be a this or a not that to us. We cannot burn stones or eat wood. Their nature forbids it. Yet we refer a suchness that is relative to us to an existence posited as absolute. The absoluteness of its existence overrides the relativity of its known qualification. The thing itself is thought to be what it is to us. This is the lot of the object. It accompanies the thing from beginning to end throughout the history of man.

Not even the numerical unity of the thing as a One against other ones necessarily belongs to the thing itself. Most of our things owe their numerical unity to our acting. The stone we throw is numerically one. To the physicist it may be a compound of events. What it is to God we do not know. The thing as object is the totality of whatever it can do to us and we can do to it.<sup>3</sup>

While the thing of the We is not yet the objective thing, its meaning or function for us becomes part of its own nature. We not only hold a thing sacred; a sacred thing is sacred just in the same way as it is hard or rough, heavy or light to us.

As men and their things move, the We cannot hold fast to the suchness of its established things.<sup>4</sup> I and You may give to the thing of a broader We a slightly different meaning and try to assert against the tribe our specific meaning. There is more than one We. Our thing is not only ours. It is a poten-



tial, and may become an actual, object of another tribe or of the family in the next cave. We discover that the same thing is a different thing to them.

We shall finally divest the thing of all the subjective meanings it has only for us or for You, and try to disentangle the properties of the thing itself from the web of particular meanings. Now our thing, filled with meanings that are known to be ours alone, is no longer the 'objective' thing. Now the first objectivity, which shields the thing of the group against my subjectivity and yours is recognized as the subjectivity of the group. Now the objective thing means the thing relatively to us as well as to them—to a wider and wider We, to our tribe, our people, the community of trade. The universe of mutual response expands. The objectivity of the thing has taken a second, third, and fourth step—as intersubjectivity of a larger and larger We. The evolution of the objectivity of the object accompanies the evolution of society as a universe of mutual response.

The human meaning of things is tied to the density of mutual response and care. When this response embraces more and more divergent groups in a wider and wider universe of a 'civilization', the density of response will be lower; response wears thinner and thinner. The objective things are the things relative to the wider We, divested of all reference to a particular group, its life and its memory. In a strong civilization, however, in which the universe of response of the wider We retains its power to interpret the order of the world, the things, and the life of man for all the smaller group it comprises, the greater universe of the wider We will determine the deeper and more relevant human meanings of the things, those which link the things to the human cosmos and the gods, and thus protect the smaller group against the narrowness, which, in case of isolation, would be their probable destiny. Although these human meanings of the things as interpreted by the wider civilization will seem to be objective properties of the thing to the smaller group, members of another civilization will not call them objective.

Finally, when there is no longer any common civilization



to interpret the human cosmos, the nature of the thing itself will be whatever no one can deny to the thing. The thing itself is no longer sacred; it is we who made it sacred. This development takes many roads and detours in long stretches of time. It never proceeds smoothly and free from pain, confusion, and strife. The men of the other tribe profane our sacred hill. We do not tolerate it. All tolerance presupposes a capacity to distinguish between objective reality and subjective meaning. To kill is easier than to tolerate one another. Whenever the nature of the thing itself and man's memories and expectations have grown into one, man abandons only with pain the image of things encrusted with human meanings.

When the 'objective' nature of this thing is divested of its 'subjective' meanings, something happens to both man and thing. The thing loses its nearness to man and its reference to life and becomes flat. Man loses the hold his meanings had on the nature of his things. Any 'meaning' will be merely subjective. Though man will continue to bestow meanings on his things, we this, you that, these meanings will no longer have a stronghold in an alleged objectivity of the things. Man needs this support; without it the things will not be his; they will no longer speak his language. The objective things will have only such properties as can be used by anyone. In the end the thing is the objective thing of objective science. What kind of thing and of 'objectivity' is this?

The Thing of Science is only a preliminary thing of a still preliminary science. It is, at any rate, not a thing relatively to an all-embracing society of mankind, invested with meanings this society could give it if it were a universe of mutual response able to endow things with meanings. Science, however, would not recognize even such a meaning as objective. Science reaches beyond any society, even beyond mankind as a society. To science, even a flag of mankind united as a world community would be merely a piece of cotton. Any meaning and role of the flag would remain subjective. For mankind could alter the flag; and what was yesterday still a flag would again be a piece of cotton.

Yet the objective thing of objective science is not the abso-



lute thing either, whatever 'absolute' may denote—the thing itself, the thing relatively to itself or to God. The objective thing of science is still relative, relative to everybody. Everybody is anybody and nobody in particular. It is the anonymous observer, any scientific observer, as far as he can be replaced by any other scientific observer.<sup>5</sup> Whenever the observations of an individual observer are 'confirmed' by any other observer, the subjectivity not only of the individual but also of the collective observer is eliminated. The rules of scientific observation guard the replaceability of the observer. The result is regarded as the thing's own nature divested of all reference to human beings. The thing is everybody's potential, though nobody's actual, object.

The discovery of the thing's own nature relatively to any possible observer is the triumph and greatness of science. By virtue of this knowledge science tells man, any man and any society, what can be done to or with the thing. Yet everybody's thing, though the objective thing of objective science, is not the absolute thing.

The modern physicist carefully avoids regarding the conceptual scheme by which he describes the thing as the scheme of the reality itself. He may even admit that these concepts have a meaning and can be defined only in the context of the operations the observer performs. He describes the thing in the conceptual mirror of physics. He wonders at the order it shows. He assumes, and must assume, that the reality itself, whatever it may be, must itself include reasons for the order his mirrors reveal.<sup>6</sup> Whereas his predecessors in their enthusiasm anticipated a knowledge of reality itself he again faces the secrets of nature in an attitude of reverence.

The absolute thing would no longer be *πρὸς ἄλλο τί*, relative to something else. It would no longer be a thing as object. Though the existence of the object is posited as absolute, its suchness is described relatively to the observer, individual, collective, or anonymous.

The thing, a being other than We, becomes our thing. The otherness, however, persists and continues to reach into the unknown. Thus it is and is not our thing. The tension be-



tween our thing and the thing itself originates in man's finiteness, forever and of necessity.

The thing is man's thing, mine and thine, your, our, their thing—the thing of a wider and wider We, finally everyone's thing. Everyone's thing is still a thing of a potential society of potential men. It is open on two sides, patiently waiting to become what it will be: on the subjective side, I and You can use it for this or for that, or give it a meaning within the limits of whatever its nature permits; on the 'objective' side, the qualification of the thing as everyone's thing is not final. Even if this everyone is the anonymous observer of physics, his knowledge of the thing is not yet knowledge of the thing itself.

In this two-sided openness of the thing, our thing and everyone's thing are referred to each other—they are forever conjoined. Our thing and everyone's thing is the same thing. My thing, which I use, encrusted with meanings, wrapped in memories of my care or our norms, is, when seen naked in its obstinate nature, everyone's potential thing.

To the student of Man, the thing, however stubborn, is what it is in the life of man as object of potential or actual subjects. The student of Man cannot isolate the thing and disregard its actual or potential relation to human beings whose thing it is and could be. In a world of absolutized objects, he cannot describe life or compare cultures, societies, or ages.

The road from the 'it' which confronts us resists or yields as something other than ourselves to the things of our 'thingness', is long. It is not quite as straight as it appears in this simplified construction.

Many an interpreter of the 'animism' of primitive religion seems to presuppose that the thing, born as a dead thing, has been subjectified, humanized, and endowed with a kind of living soul in the course of a religious interpretation. It is, however, far more probable that this evolution took the opposite course. The it—as the other thing confronting us—had been endowed with a kind of soul before it became a thing, and has later been deprived of its soul, depersonalized and



objectified, to end finally as thing of our thingness. The 'it' was quality and this quality was power, and this power was powerful enough to bestow on the subject confronting it a being relatively to itself. By virtue of this power, the 'it'—be it rock, cloud, or tree—was a kind of subject, a being like animals and men, a potential You, able to demand, plead, threaten, ask, and answer questions in its own silent manner. These men did not live surrounded by dead things as mute walls. They too may have treated some of their not yet reified things as mere objects, after having broken, conjured away, or banned their power. Their 'magic' world may be inaccessible to us. Yet no one can doubt the intimacy of these men to their not yet reified things, or the 'power'—real to them, imaginary to us—of magical signs, questions, words, to give and compel answers, to conjure, conciliate, ban, frighten, heal, and punish. Though these powers, alive in the things and in their images, may not yet have been spirits, demons, gods, beings with distinct shapes and faces, the first gods though not yet gods may be older than the first things which were only things.

Therefore one might say that the man of the first cave did away with the 'aporia' of the mere object and its mode of being. His world was not yet a world of objects, but a social world of gods, men, animals, plants, and stones making signs to and understanding and misunderstanding one another.

As hypothesis about reality this hypothesis is no more inept than other hypotheses we take seriously. However that may be, the 'thingness of the thing' is 'thingness' to man. The thing as mere object it *πρὸς ἄλλο τι* with respect to a subject. What it is in itself even the physicist does not pretend to know.



## Chapter 2

# WORLD

WORLD IS USED in many senses. We speak of the ancient and the modern world, of the gothic and the baroque world, of the world as the universe of all stars, of an old and a new world, of one world and two worlds, of the international world, the world of journalism, of business, of *le grand monde* and *le demi monde*, of the underworld. We call our family our world, the circle of our friends, our garden, our valley, our town.

So multiple a usage is not merely the confused product of accumulated tradition of long-tongued man. A many-sided reality elicits many meanings for fewer words and excuses the plurality of senses.

As the thing, so the world is and is not 'ours'. Our world is not 'the' world; 'the' world not ours. So world repeats the history of thing. It is the history of finite man. The human reality suggests more than one meaning yet keeps the many conjoined in the same ambiguous word.

'World' does not mean our environment. We are not part of our environment though we are part of our world. Nor does world mean the *omnitude rerum*, the totality of all beings as completeness of an aggregate, no member missing. It means the unity of an order.



'Embraced we embrace,' says Aristotle of space.<sup>7</sup> World means the whole 'in' which we and all other beings are. It means this whole as a whole. We embrace the world; the world embraces us. Thus it is ours. Yet our world is not 'the world'. We do not embrace it, nor are we embraced by it. Behind my world, beyond it there is still another—greater and not mine. My valley may be my world; a world war tramples over it and destroys it.

Adam and Eve, with respect to, with and against each other, could establish their first things as things of a We only by setting up before themselves some outline of a first order that pretended to encompass all their things and with their things themselves. This order was intended to take in the things remembered and expected as well as the things actually perceived, and thus to order the possible. An outline of such a scheme, running ahead of experience, guides experience. Outside it, inaccessible, unconquerable, is an absolute Otherness, its night, its terror and anguish. As order of all possible things it reaches out beyond our cave and our valley, claiming to comprise a whole in which not only we and our things but all things and all men, known and unknown, are thought to be. Our world is intended to be the world. Like the single thing, the order of all things is posited as absolute and described relatively.

If, however, world means the whole that embraces us, it is not only and not first of all the world of things. It is society, the *mundus hominum* interpreting the *mundus rerum*. Man is 'in' the society that is his, in the same emphatic sense of the little word 'in' as he is 'in' the world. Society is a universe of care and work in reciprocal response. In this universe the things become 'our' things, its order becomes our world. The *mundus rerum* and the *mundus hominum* give to and receive from each other the power of embrace.

As can easily be demonstrated, this holds everywhere and always. If even today someone makes sense by saying that his valley is 'his' world, he does not mean merely the woods, fields, and brooks but with them the human beings in the valley in whose talking, acting, caring, remembering, and

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expecting these trees, grasses, and water grow into the unity of a 'world'. He means the *mundus hominum* in the *mundus rerum*. When too many human beings from outside visit the valley and mingle either too much or in the wrong way in our talking and caring we no longer call the valley our world. When speaking of the Greek or baroque world we mean some kind of a structure of a mental space according to the rules of which men in those periods acted, talked, felt, thought, painted, built, and sang.

When in past centuries the French called the upper class *le grand monde* or simply *le monde*, they circumscribed a more or less closed society into which a man was or was not born or admitted. This society claimed to be the world. It demanded that its members behave according to its rules and assumed that they alone knew how to behave. The right of responding and being responded to was restricted to this society. Whoever did not 'belong' was 'nobody'. This *mundus hominum* as a universe of discourse interpreted the things in the name of all.

This use of the term world survives as a meaningless habit in a time when *les hommes et les femmes du monde* no longer know what to say to one another or how to behave according to the rules of something that could be called world, or try to interpret either for themselves or for someone else the *mundus rerum*. Yet the empty mask should not deceive us: this world was once a world.

When we speak of the world of the theatre, of politics, of journalism or high finance, we indicate a kind of unity of a way of thinking and living in a universe of response in which man aims at reputation, status, a weighty voice.

All these 'worlds' demean themselves as worlds in the world confined by some kind of horizon, wide or narrow, clear or beclouded, that is the horizon of this group, though from the first caveman to the nationalists of today such a world may be nothing but the stupidity of the group in which individuals feel or hope to feel protected.

When the fathers of Christianity guided the faithful away from 'the world' toward God, the world was not the universe



of the stars but the human society of their time. Even Christianity could denounce this world of ours only by substituting a new *mundus hominum atque rerum*: first, the community of the faithful on earth as a universe of work, thought, and care; then, above this earthly society the *civitas dei*, the society of God, the angels, and the blessed, the timeless world of God in which this our world came to be and will perish, and the time of man begins and ends.

In all these cases the world is a *mundus rerum* as *mundus hominum*. A We interprets the world. Yet the world of such a We is but a world in 'the' world. 'The' world is full of such worlds which come to be and pass away in it.

As long as the group enjoys a monopoly, the individual is fettered to his narrow world. The world of a single We is the world of the I. This *mundus rerum* and the *mundus hominum* are one and the same. There is no private world of the individual. He whom his group ousts perishes; as he loses his people, he loses his things.

A first and single We is a mere construction of an imaginary beginning. The mere construction hides the tensions which become manifest as the single man begins to live as a man and forms a group. The young men capture their women from the families of the neighboring caves. The group splits into subgroups and meets other groups. The two movements entwine.

The relation of our world to the world, of the *mundus hominum* to the *mundus rerum*, changes in diverse and confused ways. But our world is still referred to the world. The claim that they are identical is ever again repudiated and renewed. As within the group subgroups emerge, the original family grows into a family clan. The subgroups may modify slightly the meaning of the *mundus rerum* they inherited from their fathers and grandfathers. As they go on interpreting things, each in its own way, the universe of mutual response, originally one, splits. Contacts get thinner and rarer. Or the inherited meanings preserve their power in a unity of action and care; then the world of the family may be surrounded by, or embedded in the world of the tribe, the world of the tribe



in the world of the people; thus meanings, loyalties, obligations, horizons may be thought of as being ordered in homocentric circles. 'My' world is ambiguous. It is the world of my family, my tribe, my people. Despite all the possible conflicts and tensions among the various circles there is, however, a whole 'in' which I am; a *mundus hominum* still interprets the *mundus rerum*. Or groups of different stock meeting one another fight or trade. One conquers the other. The same things mean different things to the two groups. The meanings are incompatible; each group insists upon its narrow world. This is the stupidity inherent in the group as group.

Yet even this stupidity has difficulty in maintaining itself. Slowly, in a thousand ways, in pain and struggle a kind of order comes to be in which the things, divested of their jarring meanings, will have their place as things of use in a world of trade with other things of use. As long as this universe of trading and dealing remains partial, confined to certain sides of certain things without total claim, the common order of use will have no power of embrace. Even today it does not have. Finally, neighboring peoples may admit the holiness of one another's sacred animals or even acknowledge a greater God who manifests himself in both. The group, however, will only unwillingly and in anguish abandon its cherished stupidity. The horizons which re-echo our responses, the norms of our acting and wishing, the laws of society, the structure of status, prestige, and power are pinned to it. Our chiefs and medicine men have a specific relation to our gods—to sun, moon, and stars. The world whose remote sky may vault above our sky and encompass other people with other gods, kings, and priests, may be wider, yet our words do not reach it. Hence it is powerless.

These two developments operate on and proceed in each other. The horizons not only arch, one above the other; they cross each other, overlap and interlace, whenever flexible men, escaping the monopoly of the single group, mingle and blend, form and transform groups of interest, power, love, or ideas and their mixtures, and in building the world that is intended to be theirs and their world that is meant to be the world,



relentlessly strive to widen the narrowest, to constrict the widest.

Our world should be ours; it should continue to be our world. In it we are protected. We hold it; it holds us firmly. Our festivals and celebrations, holy symbols and words find the sky under which a We feels and knows that it is a We. We long to preserve it. It is frail.

Yet our world cannot be the world if we think of it as confined by the mountains around our valley or by the sea around our island. Once the narrow world is felt to be narrow, it ceases to be 'world'; it can no longer even claim to be. The world should be wide and end far off behind all distance, yet it should be ours.

To the historical or social forces that spring from these two movements changeable names are given in terms of changeable conditions. Yet longing for the narrow in a world too wide, or longing for the wide in a world too narrow may be but man's eternal lot. Forever the narrow world will become rigid habit, and for a while kept firm by the compulsion of material conditions and the interest of power. One day or another it will be felt as a prison. Forever the widened world will slip from man's grasp and his words be lost in the empty distance. Then man may build himself a new narrowness. Rare and precious are the ages of a so-called high culture when a happier society succeeds for a time in widening its world without losing it and binding the meaning of the nearest things to a distant sky behind all things and men.

History, building worlds in the world, pulls and pushes back and forth the meaning of the term. Ever again will some men call their valley their world. Ever again will 'world' mean the universe of the stars or the broad back of the earth on which we carry on world trade or wage world wars. The ambiguous first and second meanings merely reflect the ambiguity of the thing the term denotes. As the history of the 'thing' as object, so the history of the term 'world' accompanies the history of society. As societies diffuse, mingle, and move, the one within or on top of the other, so the horizons of what human beings at any instant call their world, pene-



trate, cross, overlap. Sometimes some of these horizons are merely fragments fading in the fog. Yet even in these fragments the whole they have lost is still present as absence; its absence is power—need, longing, insecurity, anguish—and moves the societies of man.

All these worlds are 'subjective', worlds in the world. We are unwilling to recognize any as objective. None is absolute, none the 'true' world. So all seem equal in rank and right. But are not some poor and narrow, others rich and wide; some, rigid, others flexible; some capable, others incapable of comprehending the new experience in their order; some bright and clear, others dim and confused?

The question, however, is not one of an abstract ranking, of things and world detached from human existence and their claims to objectivity. Man as *mundus hominum* interpreting the *mundus rerum* interprets first of all himself. In the world he builds, in the things and their order he attempts to understand himself. But who is that, himself? This one here, the contingent changeable being? Or 'eternal' man? It is human existence, inbetween birth and death, blooming and withering, inbetween God and beast, akin to the gods, remote from the animals, or akin to the beasts, apart from any god, inbetween truth and mere semblance, inbetween the glimmer of his joy and the night of his grief, inbetween power and powerlessness, pride and humility, care and exuberance, in all the thousand 'inbetweens' of his finite existence.

The Christian understands his human existence in the cosmic image of the Bible, the Greek in Homer's. The cosmic image is only a cloak. The folds of the cloak and their movements reveal and conceal the eternal joints. The cosmic image leads or misleads man's thinking about himself. Man answers the question 'what he is' by his place in a cosmic image of his own making.

Thus the richness and the poverty, the breadth and narrowness, the clarity and fogginess, the brightness and dimness that differentiates all these historical worlds from one another may after all not be merely the wealth and poverty, clarity and dimness of the things and their abstract order, but the



wealth and poverty, clarity and dimness of the human meanings and by virtue of these human meanings the wealth and poverty, brightness and dimness of the image of man or even of the eternal fabric of human existence, translucent in his image. Perhaps the 'truth' of some and the lack of truth of others of these cosmic images is just this; perhaps the *res* to which, according to the school definition of truth, the *intellectus* should conform is not the objective order of the things detached from man but the fabric itself of human life, which man hides from himself in the one and reveals in the other of these man-made images of the world.

We insist upon calling some past cultures great though we have trouble in defending such language against historical change and the relativity of all criteria. Perhaps in the inner veracity and simple honesty of their images of man we could discover why the term classic still and ever again has a normative meaning, though it long ago became an historical concept.<sup>8</sup>

What does 'world' mean to present-day man? We use the patient word loosely, in all its meanings and connotations. Now we mean our valley and our town; now the busy doings of mankind around the earth; now the universe of the countless stars. Yet these stars are not the stars of our valley; they no longer shine on humanity. They are the stars of objective science. Our world is not the world. We know it. The objective world, however, is not ours. It is not a world at all if world means the whole 'in' which we are, embracing it, embraced by it. Not even the physicist as a human being lives in this world.

Far apart are our world and the world; not to be apprehended is their relation to each other. Hence the subjective use of the term appears to us to be mere habit, metaphor, misuse.

Like the reference of our world to the world, so the relation of the *mundus hominum* to the *mundus rerum* is severed. We belong to many 'we's'. Most of our allegiances are partial. Here and there we can still move from group to group in relative freedom. The horizons of most of these groups blur or cross. None can and most do not even try to comprehend



the world as a whole 'in' which we could feel ourselves as part. Behind all these partial groups the horizon of the 'nation' may still be visible, the sky of the country that is ours, the inherited ways of thinking, the common memory of its history, and beyond it the doubtful unity of a 'civilization' comprising more than one nation, shaped by each nation in its own way.

Yet none of these *mundi hominum* reaches the *mundus rerum*; none can even dare fill the things with human meanings other than those of practical use, let alone interpret human existence on the basis of its order. Our things are the things of science. Science has established, though only preliminarily, their objective nature. We believe science knows the things as they are objectively, in themselves, detached from human reference. To us their order is the objective order of the *mundus rerum*. Though science itself may admit that we know this order only relatively to the conceptual mirror of the anonymous observer who is everybody and nobody, we absolutize this mirror and take the order it mirrors as the order of reality itself. This order, however, is devoid of meaning; it even repudiates meaning. Only by keeping away human meaning did science discover what we call the laws of nature and in them the nature of things. Mutable is all meaning, the product of the history of mutable societies. The one thing that stands firm, the law of nature, is devoid of meaning. It seems that by losing its place in the 'objective' world, meaning has lost its being.

And not only this. Man who, forgetful of the physicist's relation to his subject matter, thinks the image of nature in the physicist's mirror is the image of reality itself is susceptible to still more dismal thoughts. He himself becomes a thing of this 'objective' reality. Is he too not a system of physical chemical events? Then not only a given meaning but to give a meaning becomes senseless—illusion and semblance.

Few men dare draw such a radical conclusion. Between 'scientific' knowledge and the naive knowledge of daily life lies a pseudo-scientific twilight of dim words and vague concepts where man may interpret and misinterpret the hard,



naked, abstract data of the science of nature for the comfortable world of daily life and use.

Our world is the world of men, their dealings around this earth. We no longer interpret the things. Our things are things of use, materials, tools, merchandise, not symbols, wonders, images, or secrets. We have power over nature. This power increases, thanks to science. The society of man, not nature, is our destiny.

When then is the absolute world? The world is posited as absolute and qualified relatively. The 'absolute suchness' of an absolute world would be relative not to a maximum knowledge of the anonymous observer of science but to the perfect knowledge of a divine observer outside the world. It is an idle question beyond any faculty of man. I venture no answer. I have to do with man.

The question of the absolute world is of necessity an unanswerable question. Man puts it and is compelled to put it by virtue of the very reasons he cannot answer it.<sup>9</sup> A world-building being tries to understand himself in the order of self-made cosmic images he absolutizes. The discrepancy between the naturalness of the question and the impossibility of an answer is itself part of the human reality.

Man, however, by his own nature, will not be content with Kant's answer to the unanswerable question and think of the absolute world or the objective totality of all condition, as an idea of the *Vernunft* that transcends all possible experience. As scientist he could—exploring the explorable and silently revering the unexplorable—as man he could not. He desires to know; he feels he must know what he himself is, and he does not see any way except by his place in the objective order of all beings he calls 'the world'.

He tries to go the way of science. If, against the warnings of the physicist, he absolutizes the concepts of the anonymous observer, he will look in vain for himself in the cosmos of observable data, events or entities or objects from which his own being as subject and observer has been excluded and will be a stranger to himself.

He will go the way of myth. If he does he will find a place



for man in the mythical image of a cosmos that includes himself as subject in an all-comprehensive order of the Many—this world, however, will be his world, not the absolute world.

He will try to deceive himself and mingle mythology in his science or hang a scientific cloak on his mythology. Turning from myth to science and from science to myth he will finally dream the dream of an all-knowing god who looks down at the world as a universal society—immense relatively to man's measure of space and time—of beings of all kinds and all alive—the smallest but for a moment's moment—observable to man only as events or not at all, a few only growing to be plants and animals, all, in innumerable languages, trying to converse with, mostly misunderstanding one another, unable to interpret their signs as signs or not even reaching their like, incessantly building and destroying societies, smaller or larger, within the universal society, all longing to be and all repeating in their own miserable way the lot of man. Awakening from this dream of an all-knowing god man will again know that he is only a man asking a question he cannot answer.



## *Chapter 3*

### MAN

I DO NOT ASK what Man is. This question would presuppose agreement on the meaning of the tiny word 'is'. About its meaning, however, there is little clarity and no agreement. I am searching for the structure of the relational fabric in which thing, world, and man are referred to one another. In it the thing becomes a thing, the world a world; in it man is a being who needs and depends upon things, loves himself, clings to life, founds societies, and builds worlds in the world.

Although thing and world refer to man, the man referred to is not a being that without thing and world would have an existence or reality of its own. If thing and world refer to man, man returns the reference. A relational context antecedes any man as well as any thing as thing and any world as world.

We say man is an 'individuum', and 'individuality', a 'subject', a 'self', a person, or a personality. The connotations, which in loose usage accompany these terms, flicker. Whatever this meaning, they are not intended to differentiate one man from another but to expound man under different aspects. As one of these, man is all the others. His nature calls forth a multitude of words.

As 'individuum' man is indivisible; each man is numerically



one. There are no halves. Although man may have parts, the parts are nothing outside the oneness. A hand cut off is no longer a hand. Whenever we ascribe an individuality to the indivisible individuum we indicate that this indivisible 'one' is qualitatively unique in some way or other—slightly different from all other 'ones'.

This numerical One, qualitatively unique, is a 'subject'. In the term subject we imply the object as its correlate. Whereas the object has its being relatively to others, we allow the subject to be something to itself as well as to others. The subject has objects. Thus it has the power to bestow upon something else a kind of being relative to itself as subject.

This unique One, as subject the origin of a relative being of other things, is a Self. The term 'self' seems to aim at the identity in time of the subject with itself. I, though changing, remain the same: I, myself. Everyday speech takes this identity of mutable man with himself for granted. Philosophers who deny this 'self' never had any influence whatever on man's speaking, thinking, or acting. But our usage of the term goes beyond the mere identity of the Self. We say, for instance, this is he, himself, exactly as he is—his true Self. By this we indicate that a man, in his speaking and acting, can be more or less himself. We even talk of self-realization, seeming to imply that the self is something that can be more or less 'actualized'.

This unique One, a subject and a self, we call a person. This term, of dubious origin, seems at first to mean the mask through which the actor speaks. Man, histrionic by nature, plays a role. If he is to be a 'person' he should not talk out of turn or speak the wrong line. The theatre has given the term 'person' to the scholars of law who use it to denote the natural or artificial carrier of legally binding action. This meaning implies the identity of the self with itself and its capacity to take on and fulfill obligations. A person can make and break promises. We do not credit animals with this capacity not even toward other animals. Thus we finally tie up the meaning of the term with the dignity of man. The character of



man as a person can be impaired. The modern powerholder wants to destroy it. Man as a person respects himself.

Further, man is said to be or to have a personality. The use of this term wavers between a minimum and maximum meaning. In the minimum sense 'personality' replaces the term 'character' which is compromised for scientific man by its moral connotations. In this sense everyone is a personality. In the maximum sense personality is an elaborate, distinct, fully formed figure, and denotes the highest praise. The reason for this ambivalent usage may be in the reality itself. It may be man's lot that in the minimum sense everyone is a personality though not everyone succeeds in becoming a personality in the maximum sense.

It is not altogether easy to say what we mean by the latter sense. The personality in the emphatic sense has an inner form; this inner form has a range; as a unity it seems to pervade a wealth of tensions and stresses which it guides from a hidden center. Yet this unity remains full of surprises, beyond any rule we can formulate. It becomes most apparent in surprises that afterward seem to the observer to have been just what is most personal in this personality.

Evidently, such a personality is, as *individuum*, indivisible in an emphatic sense: as an individuality uniquely unique, as a subject conspicuous for his power to bestow on everything, be it man or thing, a being relatively to himself—the hue of a color, the quality of a tone. So the personality cannot help creating an atmosphere around himself whose impact the others find it difficult to resist. Moreover, he is always himself, and a Self in an emphatic sense, identical with himself, even when simulating. Alcibiades is always Alcibiades whether he eats black soup with the Spartans or, dressed in a purple cloak, the delicacies of the East at the table of the Persian King.

Thus the personality is a 'person' in an emphatic sense not because he keeps his promises but because he remains true to himself even when false to his words. He never speaks a wrong line. A man, however, cannot plan to become such a personality. He becomes a personality in intercourse with men, things, and gods, in the passion of life, in fighting and con-



quering, in acting and resisting, and never without suffering. In the end he will be full of scars. The personality has a history; children, although in their obstinacy individualities and small persons, are not yet personalities in the maximum sense of the word.

There is still another term I omitted. In modern psychology the subject, the self, the person, the soul, has been replaced by the ego. This ego, however, has lost the *Tu*.

But why all these words? Our talk is loose and vacillating. Yet languages are wise. The many words with their different denotations and connotations draw circles around the human reality. Man 'is' all of them.

It does not matter at all that some philosophers, slaves to a preconceived meaning of 'is', deny to man a self or a being as subject or person, and treat him as a society or a compound of events, as a continuum of a stream of consciousness, or as a mechanism of stimuli and reactions, or as something else. No society pays any attention to them. Every society must treat man as a 'one'. None can help it. Were man not a 'one', society would force him to be a 'one'. Society needs even the qualitative uniqueness of the individual, under all circumstances. It may want the average man and try to cultivate him. Although society may not wish man to be too unique, no society in its senses can wish to deprive him altogether of a last remnant of uniqueness. If it did, it would ossify. Only the powerholder can wish to deprive at least his serfs of this last remnant. He, however, puts the serf outside the universe of mutual response as which the society lives. If there is to be a society, man must be a self, identical with himself. Were man not a subject and had he not the power to bestow on others a being relative to himself, society would not even begin to come to be. He must even be a person. Society holds him to his role, perhaps even to his word.

The many terms do not designate an abstract man in empty space. There is no such man. They qualify man in social life: only in social life is he what he is—even the hermit, alone with himself, his animals, his trees, and his God. Yet these words seem not to be words of all times, hence not words for



immutable man. They are the products of particular phases in the history of ideas. Certainly all owe their full meaning and color to a particular time and society. But did the word really create the thing? Was man not a person before the Protestant discovered the moral self-consciousness of responsible man and tied his dignity as man to the word? Were human beings not personalities before the present-day man of standardized mass society evinced his secret longing in the stress he laid on the term? The Greeks had no special term for individuality, yet there was never a society more in love with individual splendor. Words are discovered in the alert awareness of the possession and the lack of the thing they designate. They color the things with the color of their age; they do not create them. Man as man was an individuality before he talked about it. Man's words about himself are more mutable than man himself.

The being called man, dependent upon the things he needs, founding societies, building worlds within the world, interpreting his own existence, inventing gods, is always a man in a particular time and society, born among specific things in an already established world, as a specific this one, a creature of a cosmos already created, a being already formed among beings that are being formed, a product of action. Yet, as such, he is, although to only a small extent, the origin of acting, forming, making. His nature is twofold. As the one he is the other.

Homer, we say, made the cosmos and the gods of the Hellenes. But pre-Homeric Greece made Homer. Everyone lives in a pre-formed world. No one can help further forming, transforming, reforming this world—each a tiny bit, and if he is a Homer, a great deal. But since the individual man does such forming together with others in a universe of discourse, work, and care, his role may hardly be visible; yet only by sharing in this formation do the things become his things and the world his world. Though society seems to be the builder, it feels, thinks, acts, and builds only in and through the individual. Only in the I and the You does the We live. The world whose maker is man is no longer entirely the same



world as made him. Thus the world in which we move is moved by our movement, by that of others, or perhaps by a motion of its own. Movement within something that moves is history, a compound of occurrences in many layers.

Man undergoes and exerts compulsion. He makes claims; others make claims against him. He desires and meets the desires of others. A million tensions between what he is and what he could be, what he can and what he wants to be, what he wants and what he ought to be, are his riches; their concord and discord his joy and sorrow. Never is he only that which he is 'factually' in this one instant. Every moment he transcends his own factual being. Any factuality of an instant is what it is as something moving, surrounded by a halo of 'can' and 'cannot', 'will' and 'will not', 'should' and 'should not'. All are part of and inherent in the living being. The merely factual, if isolated, is an abstraction of the observer.

That 'ought' of which I speak is not yet restricted to a moral 'ought'. It means the demands man meets and must meet within an already formed system: demands in his own heart, of the you, the We, the whole of the situation, of the world. It is of various kinds. Only rarely and never entirely is man what he ought to be, in many senses of this dubious 'ought'.

The occurrence we call life includes another element. Man, the subject, can be his own object. He can 'behave' toward himself. In a certain sense his behavior is always behavior toward himself too even when in his behavior toward others he entirely forgets himself.

Man's behavior toward himself can be meant in a simple and naive or in a reflective sense. In the first sense it means something quite innocuous which accompanies man through time and space, even when he does not talk or think about it, even when he interprets his existence in the light of the cosmic image he builds, he fancies he is behaving only toward gods, demons, or spirits that possess him. In the second sense man not merely behaves toward himself but reflects on this behavior, behaving toward his behavior toward himself. This second sense is by no means a reality of all times, but the



virtue or vice, mischief or misery of certain men in certain ages and intellectual climes. In these cases, the ego, its attention focused upon itself, is at every moment aware of itself, behaving toward and conscious of its own behavior toward others.

Here I deal only with the first sense. It does not mean merely that man as a being capable of some knowledge sometimes desires to know himself instead of other things. More is meant, and less. The slight feeling of contentment or uneasiness about my success or failure of yesterday includes a behavior toward what I did and was yesterday. Even the vainglory of Thomas Hobbes presupposes a kind of behavior of man toward himself. Even David Hume, who denies the self in the first part of his treatise, in the second part cannot help describing the pride and humility of the owner of a garden as behavior of man as subject toward man as object with respect to the garden. Most feelings or sentiments of the human heart and soul entail a behavior of man toward himself before any reflection of man on this behavior. Even bodily pain presupposes it.

Not only can man love himself in a way that still demands clarification; he always loves himself. Yet he can hate himself, be angry with himself, pity, admire, laugh at, disparage himself. In any case, he is always satisfied or dissatisfied with himself. He can talk with himself; in a certain sense all his thinking is a sort of talking with himself. He not only speaks but also hears what he says. He can hide from himself, deceive himself, and lie to himself. Thus he can be his own You, and in a certain sense he always is. He can look at himself in the mirror as one of the many things of this world, a relatively irrelevant one or the only one of importance.

In all behavior of man toward himself man is a twofold being, at once subject and object, the determiner and the determined, the former and the formed. He is both—as one and the same man. This duality as unity is merely the expression of the process of formation in which man, conversing with things, men, and gods, is forming and making, being formed and made, whether wittingly or not.



The maker or former has already been formed, the already formed is to be formed. In this process of formation man is *natura naturans*, *naturata*, and *naturanda* all in one. In still more pretentious language, ill-fitting his poor nature, he is *creator*, *creatum*, and *creandum*.

The difficulties of such a conception are great. It would be more convenient, and would facilitate a science of man, if man were a mechanism of stimuli and reactions. Then, however, he would not be man and life would not be alive.

As a subject man is forever an I, and as object of this subject, a Me. The I and the Me seem to be two, yet are one; they seem to be one, yet are two. Neither 'is' without the other. Any theory that either separates or identifies the two destroys the unity of the process we call life.

Man is his own object in many ways. The Me can mean many things: the Me of yesterday, today, or tomorrow, or the Me of everyday, the Me in this particular action or situation, or the Me in all actions or situations. I am angry with myself about my attitude yesterday in court. I might have been able, ready, or willing to behave differently. Now it is too late. I cannot take back that Me. This Me was I, not someone else. Yet this Me was not I. I can shove this Me aside—that was not really I, myself, I am really quite different; at any rate, I could be. I as I is still something different from these Me's that became actual at that or this time. I 'transcend' them all, at least potentially. But I transcend not only them. I as an I transcend the actual Me's of all past and future. I am continually imagining that I am something different from what I ever have been or ever will be.

The Me of yesterday and tomorrow and everyday is the Me that became actual in the world of men and things, a being that came into existence in an already existing world. Every one, yet none of these Me's, is the I. The I is the I to any such Me, and to many others that are possible or impossible, being both more and less than any Me. As mere I, isolated, it cannot be caught. When caught, it will be the I to a Me. Man as I without reference to a Me is not accessible to himself except in oblique thought. The I continually re-



cedes from his own grasp and leaves only a Me in his hands. The I himself is still something else—darker, in deeper hiding, beyond anything we can lay hold of. Therefore the I is full of weird surprises to himself. In need of protection against themselves some men keep close to an orderly and harmless Me established in the society of men and things. Or man, at odds with his 'libido', stammers something about an 'it' that desires and strives in him and is not he himself. But the I is not an it. Or the I imagines himself to be 'possessed' by a god or a demon, or looks into an abyss or feels as if he were losing himself, as he by no means is only the I to the well-established accessible Me to which he nevertheless clings. Or great poets speak of a 'daimon',<sup>10</sup> an inaccessible power at the core of what is now called personality, unique in each case, swaying our destiny and guiding our 'development' according to a secret rule.

We have a great variety of attempts to formulate, express, or describe such feelings, attempts in different mythological, philosophical, or psychological languages of different ages and cultures. The puzzle of the I and the Me being both one and two accompanies man through the history of his thought about himself.

Thus the I seems to be an area of potentialities within not yet definite limits of more or less possible possibilities, of past possibilities that have not, of future possibilities that may never, come to be, open to the past and future as the same I. I may have had a future that never became actual and shall be accompanied to the end of my life by possibilities, now past, of which I did not take advantage. The I is that which desires in my desiring, wills in my willing, hungers in my hunger, feels in my feeling, thinks in my thinking, determines in all my determining, forms in all my forming, the mystery of being a 'subject'—that which has the power to give to things, men, and myself a sort of derivative being, a reality of objects relative to myself. As such it is a conception to be contested easily, something suspected again and again of owing its origin to a grammar that posits a doer to any doing—something that is ever again talked away and dissolved into mere



'its', instincts, impulses, desires, events, impressions, or whatever else—until in some schools of modern experimental psychology there will be no thinker but only thoughts, feelings but no one who feels, desires but no one who desires. Yet this I does not care; despite all such talk it crops up again and again, completely sure of itself, as the I of fear, fright, love, and all feeling and thinking.

This I is in any Me and leers at whoever denies it. In olden times it was called the soul though it was the body as well—the thing that moves itself and others, that is and can be moved by others, the soul whose limits no one can measure, "so deep is its logos", as Heraclitus said.

This I is the I that 'behaves' and changes its behavior. It behaves toward others, things, men, and world, and among all these others toward itself, toward the definite Me that is entangled in all these. Hereby, nevertheless, its behavior toward the Me is tied up with its behavior toward these things; the Me is referred to the thing, the thing to the Me, yet with changing emphasis, moving to and fro between the two theoretical extremes of a Me that seems to vanish in the thing, and of the thing that seems to vanish in the Me. The Me is always entangled with something else—thing, man, or world. Though we may regard the I as the mysterious former or maker of the Me as formed or made, yet that which is formed in such forming, made in such making, is not merely the Me but something else too, a thing other to the I as well as to the Me. It is only in this other thing and with its help that man makes and determines himself. Man does not, nor can he, 'actualize' his Self without attempting to actualize something else, whatever it may be. All the great 'self-actualizers' actualized their valuable selves only accidentally and unwittingly in actualizing something else. This something else should never and by no means be forgotten; without it the Me that is formed, determined, and actualized would be merely the 'beautiful soul' in a rocking chair. The Me of yesterday I am angry at is the Me involved in yesterday's events, a particular situation of men and things. My anger refers this situation to me, refers me to the situation.



My anger over the situation is mixed with my anger at myself. And in my uneasiness I may not know whether I am angry at myself, the others, over the situation, or the world in general. As far as my anger is anger at myself, I seem to measure the actuality of yesterday's Me against a mere possibility of the I that could have acted differently. But there is more to it than that. The range of mere possibilities does not provide me with a measure. I measure and judge yesterday's Me by one or by several specific—at any rate distinct though perhaps only vaguely qualified—possibilities with respect to something I want or ought to be, by some kind of 'image'. It may not be an image and may hardly deserve the name. It may be dim, its outlines hazy. It may be bound to a specific situation. A particular possibility may belong to my real possibilities only in my imagination and wishes—beyond anything I can really be or do.

Man's images of himself are of a thousand kinds—dreams, modest or pretentious, emerging from his dark heart, or schemes of cold reason; they need not be just images of the stubborn, individual I; they can be images of man as man, or images of the man of a society; they can be both, the one fading into the other. They are always images of a Me that man tries to become, wishes to have been, or in some remote corner of his soul desires to be: images of the Me of yesterday, of tomorrow, or every day, images of Man in the cosmos, of men, things, and gods. Every man carries some such image and holds it up to himself in his desires and wishes; by it he measures, consciously or unconsciously, in his ease and uneasiness, pleasure and displeasure, his actuality of yesterday, tomorrow, and every day. Where he got it does not matter—from himself, others, society, the fathers or their gods. It is always an image of man in a world of men, things, and gods, here or beyond. Man in forming such an image, and in forming himself or others, is 'directed' toward something, whatever it may be. Only as a being directed somehow can he get angry at himself. The image is merely expression of this vector. The I is never alone with its Me. There is always such an image, blurred and uncertain though it may be, silently



looking on. And even if there were no such image looking on, its absence would be there—its lack or want as something real indeed, since without it the I and the Me would flutter about in empty space, unguided through the night.

Let me put an eternal girl in front of her eternal mirror. The girl in the new dress examines her image in the mirror. She is or is not pleased with herself. In such pleasure and displeasure many things are intermingled in many and changeable ways. I, this girl, would, could, should look better than I actually look. Better, that is, as I would like to look in order to correspond with the image of my wishes that I bear in my girlish soul, or the image to correspond with the aesthetic or moral code of my society. Perhaps I would wish to look a little different, more alluring than I ought to and actually do look. But I do not peer into the mirror merely to see how I look to myself—the Me to the I. I take on the role of others and look at myself with their eyes and desire to know what I seem to be to them. For I am to myself what I am to these others—it is part of my being—and if I cannot be what I would like to be, I want at least to seem what I am not. I even succeed in making this semblance part of my being. I work at it, hiding my not quite straight leg or darkening my eyebrows, and imagine I am what I seem when I seem to others what I am not. Thus semblance mixes with reality since I cannot be what I want to be, since I should not be what I am, can be, or want to be. The I, even when alone before the mirror, is not alone with the Me. The I refers the Me to others. And the image in the darkness of my soul looks on. Again there is more than one image: the image in the eyes of a You, of the boy I love; another in the eyes of a We, a stereotype of society; my image of what 'they', the others, admire, argue back and forth in my soul with something that I, personally, the little rebel, would like to be, or if I cannot be would at least like to seem in my own eyes. The girl before the mirror with all her interrelated variables belongs to every age.

The girl in this specific example seems to be concerned only with her appearance in the mirror, thus with herself. The human being who acts in a society, gives or applies laws,



makes revolutions, fights battles, clears the wilderness, or weaves the cloth of a goddess, sees his Me with respect to something that is not he himself.

You and I are sitting opposite each other. There is something elusive in you and in me: the mysterious I withdrawing from our grip, a still possible otherness, a source of surprise. What remains in our hands is a Me, a manifestation of the I in the world of men and things entangled in the manifold things round about. Often it is merely my image of such a Me and not at all your Me—the Me-to-your-I. Perhaps you show me only the image of yourself you want me to see. Human beings always show one another the images of themselves they want the others to have. This image can, but by no means must be, the image each holds up to himself. All kinds of images, both true and false, of the I and of the You may be silently present—images of an I as it is or seems, wants to be or to seem, though it is always something else beyond its own actual or possible knowledge. Why do I say this? How could it be of help to place each particular actual man as a Me of both himself and of others between an inaccessible, forever receding I and blurred, hazy images which are not even images? How laborious and useless!

Yet I do not aim to answer the question what man is as a being among other beings. I am trying to grasp the dynamic context in which he is what he is: this is the reality to be uncovered. This reality is movement, moving and being moved in something that moves. In this moving reality man behaves toward himself in behaving toward others.

Man, everyone agrees, loves himself above all else. Supported by overwhelming evidence and in spite of hypocritical pulpits and schools, the French moralists of the 17th, and the English realists of the 18th Century, set up *amour propre* and self-love as the motive of all motives that sway men's souls. This self-love slips into every disguise, sucks honey from every flower, takes on all forms, hides behind all virtues. It fights and slanders itself—from self-love.<sup>11</sup>

In this reasoning a premature answer to the 'why' of human action steps before the 'what' of self-love. What happens in



self-love? Who is the lover, who the beloved? The same yet not quite the same. Sometimes a man hates himself—he may be the same man who loves himself so abundantly—and perhaps from self-love. Who, in such hatred, is the hater and who the hated?

Self-love needs articulation. There are many kinds. The unqualified notion misleads the self-interpretation of man, and all the beautiful honesty is in vain. The lover and the beloved of self-love are, yet are not quite identical. There is the love of the I for the I or for a Me of yesterday and everyday, perhaps for an image of wishes and dreams, for a semblance of the I. Since, however, these three are distinguishable but not separable, since they always refer to one another, their mutable relation is the source of countless specific ways in which they step apart and come together again, hide in one another, each pretending to be another. Self-hate can sneak into self-love in many ways.

There is, first of all, the love of the I for the I as I. As, however, the I as I isolated from any Me ever again eludes the I, this love is not yet behavior of man toward himself. It is the love of the maker or the determiner for his making and determining, the love of the subject to be a subject. This self-love, alone and isolated, is hardly more than the love of life. I am the one who is alive. The love of the living for life is a necessity of nature, her blessing and wisdom. Whatever lives fears, must fear, death. This self-love, which is not yet self-love, is, should, and must be universal. The moralist who preaches against it preaches against life.

This love still lacks an object. When posited for itself and alone, it is unconditional and limitless. It wanders aimlessly into the boundless. It seems to settle everywhere, hides in all loving and desiring, and lets everything that is loved and desired be my beloved and my desired—be 'mine'—in a human meaning of 'mine' that refers the beloved and the desired to the I who loves and desires.

This love of the I for the I becomes self-love proper only as love for a Me or the image of a Me. This Me and its image is the Me-to-the-I of the lover. Only now does self-love have



an object. The I wants to love and to be able to love this Me. But this Me is changeable; moreover, it is always a Me in a world of men and things. Perhaps the I cannot constantly and unconditionally love any such Me. Here arise the difficulties of this self-love, its various devices and manifold frauds.

Man pleases and displeases himself. But loving oneself is not yet being pleased with oneself. He who is generally pleased with himself is in love with any Me of yesterday or today. He does not always love it for what it is. He may love a fake image of what he was yesterday or is today. Yet even in displeasure there may be self-love, although of a different kind. By virtue of my love for another Me I may be displeased with the Me of yesterday. 'That was not I', says the love of the I to the I, looking for the Me it could love. There always is, however, hidden somewhere in a darker corner of man's soul, some image that is loved unconditionally, as unconditionally as the I loves the I it cannot reach and for the same reason—inherent in wrestling and striving life. This image guides my love to this or that Me of yesterday or today, secretly and silently, yet transcending the I of today and everyday; it is not an image of what I really am or what I can be; it is an image of what I would like to be but perhaps neither am nor ever can be. I may adjust the image of what I am to the image of what I would like to be; I may recognize the beloved image in the Me of yesterday and today, yet merely fall victim to the age-old illusion of all lovers about their beloved. Or this image may reach so far beyond any actual or possible Me that I, in my love for so lofty an image, disparage, despise, hate, and loathe the actual Me of yesterday or even the possible Me of any day. Before, however, this self-love turns into self-hate, this hatred may turn against the others since the Me is always a Me in a world of men and things, or against the conditions of society or the world that are responsible for the fact that I am not, and am not able to be, what I fancy I could have been under different conditions.

Thus self-love as love for the changing Me always and by necessity moves back and forth between the love of the I that is not yet self-love and the love for an image that is merely



an image. This self-love is by no means sure of itself. It tries to get strength, now from the I, now from the image, in countless varieties of conjunctions. It absolutely refuses to be something simple that everyone could know or give a name to without spelling it out. For the most part, human beings do not simply love themselves in the indefinite. They love Life that lives and an image of something they are not. The Me of yesterday and today, entangled in the events of men and things, wavers. Its manifold images waver too. Men try to fasten them to the opinions of others. But these opinions too waver.

Man's relation to himself is fragile, all his self-love notwithstanding. He is easily hurt; it is difficult for him to forget an offense that hits not merely a Me but through the Me the I or the secret image.

I offer these remarks for whatever they may be worth. They are justified by the enormous role played by unarticulated self-love in man's interpretation of himself.

Man's behavior toward himself should not and cannot be isolated. Isolation is the disease and vice of a time in which the individual, having lost his things, his world, and his gods, is his own and only object of care. It is within the universal relational fabric of man, thing, and world that man behaves toward himself.

I treated the I as subject, the Me as the object of a process of formation, and conceived of that process as directed toward an image man holds before himself. Misusing a great word, I spoke of man as being *creator*, *creatum*, and *creandum* in one. Yet this process of forming and being formed, of determining and being determined, occurs in a world of men and things as the forming and making and determining of something else—of the Self only incidentally, indirectly and unconsciously. Man is not his own creator, nor a creatum or a creandum of his own creation. He creates and wants to create something else. He clings to the world. He has always already given himself to a world that is or should become his. With respect to this world he behaves toward himself and loves and hates himself. He can love himself only by referring him-



self to this world as well as this world to himself. He cannot help it. Before, in his self-love, he can refer this world to himself, he must give himself to this world as to something that is not he himself. Loving himself in the world, he loves the world.

The world is already everyone's world. Though all the stubborn things and men are in it, it is not my world. It does not embrace me but confronts me as something else, more powerful than I. What I, the poor creator, can create is neither myself nor the world. It is something much more modest: a small world within the world, a society within society. Not the exuberance of the creator but the care of the creature creates it. Only rarely does some exuberance of a creator mingle with the care of the creature. Yet, in the reciprocal resonance of mutual response this world will be mine.

Man is what he is in a world of men and things. He cannot escape this fundamental context even when he flees from men and the world into the wilderness to be alone with his transcendent God. Man, thing, and world change with respect to one another.

I have used great words for man—a poor being. In only a humble sense is man a creator, and perhaps the animal too and whatever lives.

Let us assume a system moving from a past to a future. Let it be, to no matter how small a degree, able to retain things that are past and anticipate things of the future. In wishing and desiring it behaves not only in parts toward parts but as a whole toward a whole in which it is. Such a system will have a vector that is not merely the resultant of the vectors of its parts but subsists beside, with, in, and against the vectors of the parts as well as of the environment and its parts. This is not an altogether impossible or immodest conception.

A system of this kind will remain the same system throughout the changes of its phases and will in some degree be able to behave toward itself in diverse ways. We seem reluctant to conceive of such a system unless we call in something like consciousness, soul, mind, reason, the 'I think', or the synthetic unity of transcendental apperception. This consciousness is



now considered logical precondition of this unity, now psychological description. Consciousness as logical precondition, however, need not be consciousness as psychological fact. Eventually we discover or assume a kind of subconsciousness or even the 'unconscious' and attempt to evade the difficulties by ascribing occurrences in the unconscious to a mechanism since this seems to be the only kind of occurrence we think we can understand. However that may be, the structure of such a system can be described, without resorting either to consciousness or to mechanism, in the abstract realm of pure order which is the realm of perfect mathematics, though present-day mathematics has not had opportunity or reason to elaborate mathematical tools for expressing such systems.

When a loose phantasy of men takes the liberty of regarding a flower as such a system awaiting a future perfect mathematics it may dare to concede even to a flower living in the night of its ignorance some equivalent of a behavior to itself.

Though we call both man and flower 'organism' without being quite sure what the term means, just the vague resemblance the term suggests may lead us astray. Man is far too unsure of himself to be compared with a flower, in spite or rather because of the 'I think'. Man might better be compared with a soap bubble. Since the soap bubble is not an 'organism' the comparison will not mislead anyone. Let us imagine for a moment that this soap bubble tends to make itself round as a whole and to mirror in its roundness the colorful play of light. It needs resistance and avoids it, adjusts itself a bit, can no longer be a perfect sphere, yet develops a little force to restore its roundness, carried to and fro by any breeze. It feeds on soap, water, and air, and receives its colors from the sun. As a 'directed' system it cannot help loving itself in the air and the light, and loving air and light in itself—in some equivalent of love. If it did not it would cease striving to be round and filling itself with color.

Yet the soap bubble, lacking memory and expectation, exists only in the transition from moment to moment. It cannot behave toward a real or an imaginary yesterday and tomorrow. But this is not its main deficiency.



The soap bubble is alone with soap, water, air, and light—each bubble for itself. Man, however, a soap bubble endowed with memory and expectation, exists only in interaction with other soap bubbles that remember and expect. He joins with these into systems of soap bubbles that strive to round themselves as spheres around spheres. Within these encompassing spheres the single soap bubbles come to be and pass away, engendering new bubbles in one another. The single bubbles give and take light and color from one another. Whenever such a bubble mirrors the light-filled world more clearly and in richer colors than others, whatever it mirrors is the image of the world in the wider sphere over and beyond all these other spheres. Purified and cleared, it will be reflected again in the other bubbles from which it first received its blurred image. But naturally the soap bubbles give and take from one another dimness too; the big bubble, which as a society of bubbles arches over the other bubbles, receives and returns the dull colors as well as the bright, the cold and the warm, the muddy and the clear. At the peak of something we call a culture, the soap bubbles throw back and forth at one another the colorful images in which each in its own way mirrors the sky that embraces them all, and in the sky the image of their own soap bubble existence.

I am aware that in such an idle comparison I am interpreting the soap bubble in human terms in order to interpret man as a soap bubble. This is certainly unscientific. It is, however, not more unscientific than our insistence upon interpreting man and human life in terms of such systems as soap bubbles, though we know soap bubbles only relatively to the anonymous observer, that is, in the mirror of physical concepts we no longer dare absolutize. Even the physicist is not the divine observer to whose all-knowing eye even the soap bubble appears as what it is in itself. In the eyes of this divine observer man will still be man although in the mirror of physics he appears as a system of physical soap bubbles. Even if man, in his arrogance, concedes a 'soul' and other things of that sort solely to man, the relation of a moving and directed whole to its phases and parts entailed in soul, mind, or consciousness may well belong to a process of formation that is not the pre-



rogative of man. This process is nature. Man and his history too are nature.

Hence I preferred not to preassume a separation of soul and body—the ‘soul’, that is the body we cannot see or touch; the ‘body’, that is the soul we can see and grasp. The separation of body and soul springs from our limited power of observation. It is not in the reality itself.<sup>12</sup>

We need not and should not interpret aspects we distinguish relatively to the observer and his means of observation as separate entities of the reality itself. But whatever may be the case with consciousness, the soap bubble, the separation of soul and body, and the meaning of these terms, Man is one. As one he is born and dies. Whenever we try to say what man is, and whatever the meaning of ‘is’ in our question, man is what he is, in some happiness and much misery harnessed to the unity of a frame that joins together man, thing, and world in a context of reciprocal and mutable relations.

Such a conception of man is ‘unscientific’ to the scientific man of our day. He should realize, however, that none of these conceptions of man that we call scientific because they are based upon a ‘scientific method’ reaches the concrete life of historical man who founds societies and forms worlds and interprets their images. Whoever fancies he is scientific by starting from a stream of consciousness, associations of impressions and ideas, from the saliva of Pavlov’s dogs, or any other such mechanisms of impulses, stimuli, and reflexes will be stuck long before he touches Man’s simplest knowledge of himself.

In the opera, *Der Rosenkavalier*, the aging princess, looking in her hand mirror, sings:

*How can it really be  
That I was that young Tess  
and that before long I shall be  
the ‘old princess’, the old wife of the Field Marshal?  
Look! There goes the old Duchess Theresia.  
How can it happen?  
Why should God do it  
While I am I and remain I?*



*And if He does it  
Why does He permit me  
To look at all this with so clear a mind?  
Why does He not hide it from my view?  
This is mysterious, so very mysterious.*<sup>13</sup>

Many a social scientist, prone to emulate the natural scientists, should ponder why one of the foremost mathematicians of our time uses these lines as a motto for his chapter on *Ars Combinatoria*, introducing the mathematical problems of modern biology.<sup>14</sup>



## *Chapter 4*

# LANGUAGE

**L**ANGUAGE, every and any language, illustrates by its totality the unity of a fabric or universal context that refers and binds thing, man, and world to one another—prior to this man, this thing, and this world as separate beings among many beings.

Some philosophers call language, along with myths, religions, and science, a 'work of the mind.' Others call it a system of signs among other such systems. Both definitions say almost nothing. Language will in no way be subsumed with something else under a class. It stands alone and only so can it be understood.

As a system of signs language is all-comprehensive, refusing to be restricted to specific matters or purposes. It claims to be all-capable, ready for any purpose. It refuses to be explained by any particular function. Signs are signs of something in many and diverse ways. Language cannot be tied rigidly to a specific relationship of the word to the thing or of the sign to the matter it designates.

The relationship varies from word to word, from man to man, from speech to speech. Words are forceful or weak, nearer to or further from the things they intend to denote. Each one is not by itself the sign for only its own thing. Words help each other; together they try to approach the



things, modestly or in arrogance, gently or roughly. They can be content to point in awe from a distance at the things. They can try to seize them in forceful fists. They can even make the pretentious claim that the word creates the thing of which it is the sign. But above all they can lose their things; they even lose them again and again; then they are mere words.

Though one can say that the single word, no matter how used, denotes a definite thing—each a different one—human speech, interlacing the words, can confuse and conceal the things and can do so intentionally. Language is both the master of mere semblance and the vehicle of truth. Language steps between man and thing, man and man, thing and world, man and world. It severs and it links. It serves any ends of mutable men, the wise and the foolish, the good and the bad.

Thus language, the work of thousands of years, patiently waits for the manner in which man uses or misuses it. Pre-formed, yet still open to being formed, it yields to mutable man and his societies, moods, and purposes, despite the rigidity of sound systems, words, and rules. Each individual, each age, though speaking the same language, speaks it in a specific way, which is but its own. Nevertheless, language is the one of all man's works that carries the remotest past into the farthest future.

The grammarians of the Middle Ages searched for a *grammatica universalis speculativa*—a fundamental structure of all languages in and behind their diversity. Though we may doubt that such an original grammar can be discovered, one thing is certain: this grammar would be the law inherent in a *societas universalis speculativa*. Which, we do not know.

What is language? This question is not answered by a theory of the origin of language, which is beyond memory. It is not answered by our subsuming language under a class, be it of works of the mind, be it of systems of signs. One question claims priority. What is it that, in speaking, happens to man and his things? Expression, some would say; communication, others. But such answers are no answers.

Animals as well as men 'express' themselves. They moan, shriek, purr. Man prides himself on the fact that he excels



the animal in range of expression, although he probably fails to credit the animal with any expression he is unable to recognize as expression. Animals, like men, cannot help expressing themselves: any action becomes expression whenever there is anyone able to interpret it; any movement, even a motionless face, is expression, whether we will it or not. In the eyes of animals, we read their sadness, their narrow world, and the dumbness they are unaware of and do not intend to express.

There is, however, a stricter sense in which expression occurs for its own sake. A lonely hunter in the night, the lion roars. Other lions hear him; they too roar. I discard such explanations as 'stimulus and reflex,' 'imitation,' 'suggestion,' 'contagion.' If a man of purposeful action interpreted the lion's roar as a warning to other lions to respect his hunting ground, he would miss the lion's way by a wide margin. And the lion's prey is more likely to heed his warning than are the other lions.

The lion may be roaring for the sake of roaring. Roaring, he compels the air to carry the sound and reverberate the mood of his lion-soul—its fierceness, its greed, its lust. But as it is one and the same lion who does both the roaring and the hearing, his role is twofold; roaring and hearing, he twice enjoys the lion's way.

The nightingale sings. We explain his singing as wooing. But that does not say much unless we say what in such singing and wooing happens to the nightingale in a nightingale's world. The nightingale too both sings and hears. The listening ear may even guide the singing throat. The nightingale sends and receives the sound waves—a give and take between the nightingale and his 'environment.' The bird responds to himself—and the surrounding air returns his response to himself and carries it over the trees as a question seeking the other nightingale. Man should not be too sure that he knows what, in such an occurrence, really happens.

The nightingale's song, so we say, expresses his feelings. Since, however, the nightingale has hardly made a pact with himself to set up sounds as signs of the movements of his little soul, his song cannot be an expression of his feelings unless



some qualities of the sounds and their sequences actually correspond to qualities of feelings he feels. Correspond? How can they? Strangely enough, they do. They are indeed qualities that are common to different senses. They are images of movements, attitudes, moods of the human soul.

Up to this point the bird's song is his search for response. But the world, air, and trees return to the nightingale only the nightingale. Answer and question do not differ. The song seeks the other nightingale and her answer. She hears and 'understands.' She knows what she would feel, were she herself singing such a song. It is not hard for her to take on the role of the singer. In this moment expression is communication, yet remains expression. The singing bird still hears himself, though no longer only himself, and the answer is no longer the question repeated.

Man, too, throwing himself at his foe, roars. Roaring, he expresses his martial mood. In saying that he responds to the stimuli of the situation we say little, if anything. In producing sounds whose sensuous qualities correspond to the movements of his moods, he moves and spurs on his own soul. Thus he responds to his own roar. He may at the same time intend to frighten his foe and sap his resistance—in a kind of psychological warfare. He should, however, be aware that his roaring will not sound convincing unless it be genuine expression. The foe easily discerns fear. Signs that are images, iconic signs, are less suitable for lying than are words. Animals have great difficulty in lying.

In extreme grief men have no words. Weeping, wailing, finally speaking, they seem to return to life. Why? Life is giving and seeking response. When there is no one, man is his own *alter*. The dead alone do not seek or give response. 'They hear silence only.'

Signs that are iconic signs, be they sounds or gestures, serve man and animal to impart feeling—distinct movements of the soul. The term 'soul' denotes here merely that mysterious something, whatever it is, by virtue of which a living being lives as a unity.

Sound and gesture, however, do not reach things or spell



their order. The roaring lion and the singing nightingale reach themselves and their kin. Man's word alone reaches the things as well as the other man. Men bare themselves to one another with respect to things; they bare things with respect to one another. This, and this only, is language.

The word is a late creation. It presupposes a system of sounds, elements clearly distinct from one another, yet linkable in syllables according to definite rules. The sounds are a careful selection from a multitude of noises man can produce. The system of sounds of each language has a definite structure. Its mutations follow definite principles. The single sounds and their combinations preserve in their sensuous qualities an affinity to movements, states, moods of the soul. They are open or closed, soft or hard, bright or dark. Thus they remain iconic signs. Poets still know this.

Herder says the first word was a 'word of the soul.' But the first word of the soul was not yet a word, though the first word that was a word was still a word of the soul.

The first word? A word of solicitude, anger, surprise, reproach, command? Not yet—and yet already a word? The question is an idle one. Many words struggle forth together from the joyful or miserable soul, respond and seek response from an I and a You. Some are remembered, become the property of a We—a mother and her child, a man and a woman, a circle of friends, a master and his followers. They clutch at and clench the qualities of things. In the distinctness of words the distinctness of things becomes the property of the We. This still happens every day within the narrow range of freedom the inherited language leaves for the creation of words. Later the We may neglect the property; words lose their things and their distinctness, though still mouthed by beings who, in speaking, merely move the patient air.

'Thing' is here not 'object.' Prior to the thing as object is man's relation to qualities and their powers—good and evil, sacred and profane. In words that aim at these powers, man—scared, acting, hoping—opposes the power of the word to the



power of the thing. Language calls, bans, conjures, ere it denotes.

But the word is never alone with its thing. The word is a word amid words, the thing a thing amid things. In the penumbra of the word I use stands a word I might use: silently present in request is command, in admiration contempt, in courage fear—present in the word as well as in the thing. There is always some scheme, however preliminary, of an order of the possible words and things in which any single word or thing is thought to have a potential place. It is within the frame of this scheme that the meaning of words and the nature of things are established with respect to one another. Words for powers, qualities, and relations are spun around the thing.

The name calls a halt to the wavering thing and forces it to remain what it is: endowed with a name, the thing can set itself up as subject of sentences and fetter the hitherto autonomous qualities and powers as adjectives to its grammatical throne. The name discovers the thing as this one and specific thing. It discovers the class to which the thing belongs. Man names a woolly animal sheep, thereby distinguishing it from the buffalo; now he fancies he knows what a sheep is. The word is midwife to, not parent of, the thing.

Though the word steps as mediator between man and thing, the name, reaching for the thing, never grasps it. The thing hears not; it remains silently aloof. The word reaches the other man, not the thing (albeit man believes that it reaches the thing). The magic fails; the power of the word is power over men, not over things.

The mere name is but a sign. The thing denoted remains open. It is held fast, not defined. The mere name searches and woos in vain. In the union of sentences only can the word, together with other words, weave a net around the thing and make it mine and yours; and this, only as long as my and your words remain our words.

Finally, the image becomes a mere sign, linked to its thing by a conventional agreement about its field of meaning. Yet



words and things go on to bestow on each other some of their qualities.

Language is not an aggregate, a collection of names for things. Sounds, distinct elements—members of an ordered society of sounds—cohere in syllables, syllables in words, words in sentences. Rules for variations of signs and their combinations establish the language as an all-embracing system of potential speech. Now an I speaks and seeks the response of a You to the colorful things and the world.

It is not that a multitude of objects is divided into classes, sheep becoming sheep, and buffaloes buffaloes; language spells the whole range of the possible relations of man to man and to sheep and buffaloes. In one way or another—through words, inflection, prefixes, suffixes, intonation, pitch—it distinguishes assertion, query, request, command, wish, regret, devotion, astonishment, anger; it disentangles man's tortuous relation to time, distinguishes the ways in which he looks from present into past and future, from past into future, from future into past; it distinguishes the possible modes of his acting and being acted upon—his attitudes. Language does and must do all this, for it is all born in one birth, rocked in one cradle.

As words cling to their things, order them in groups, articulate their relations, the language seems to embrace the universe. But it does so only by articulating man's possible relations to man, to the thing and to the world. Many words, though, seem to be names of objective things; posited as absolutes, they seem not to require any relation to human life. They seem to designate an objective multitude of separable entities. Other words imply a relation to the speaking being. They unfold man's relation to men and things as unity of a structure, and have meaning only with respect to one another, not as signs for separable entities.

'Active,' 'passive,' and 'middle' do not establish three classes of events. 'Past,' 'present,' and 'future' do not assign to events merely a place in time. Man acts in the active as a being that is acted upon; in the passive he is acted upon as a being that acts; in the medium he acts and undergoes action as subject



and object of his own action. In the past he remembers as a being that expects; in the future he expects as a being that remembers.

The personal pronoun does not differentiate men, and groups of men, in an objective world; it articulates the social situation, man's relation to man. In this social situation all the relations indicated by the pronouns are implied in one another.

In all languages, whatever their grammatical structure, human existence and the world of things—the realms of the so-called subjective and objective—are articulated with respect to each other, in one and the same formative process. Each language performs in its own way this mutual articulation of man's existence and the world. Different languages perform this or that particular task more or less perfectly, subtly or crudely. Each language has a clarity and vagueness of its own. We try to divine in these differences the tale of a society's forgotten history, but we should not deceive ourselves. Though the optative of the verb may disappear, man goes on wishing and hoping. The dual may be forgotten, but we are still able to convey the social character of the couple by saying 'we two,' 'you two.' Some languages have different words for co-operation, differentiating types of co-operative human relationship. Such forms may emerge and disappear as the requirements of the social situation change. Yet the difference in the thing itself remains, though we need an entire sentence to express it, and may even, for lack of a word, tend to forget it. The unity of a *grammatica universalis speculativa* is but the unity and sameness of a fundamental function of all language, to be looked for in a *societas universalis speculativa*, that is, the fundamental structure of social life.

We talk of the 'spirit' or 'genius' or *Geist* of a language. A cloud of intangibles hovers about these terms. Whatever their meaning, this 'spirit' has to do with the way man compels the things of his world to spell out his existence.

Language, being a system of potential speech, can be used in many ways and different spirits, even in no spirit at all. But this system of possible speech is not absolutely indifferent to



how we use it. Not unlike a field of force, it contains impulses for and against modes of speech, and exerts pressures far beyond all grammatical rules of correct usage. A formative power seems to reside in the structure of language itself. All languages can be spoken well and badly; yet different languages seem to differ in the degree to which they demand to be spoken well and resist mistreatment. This difference in demand and resistance is not merely the respect or disrespect of a society for the form of speaking and writing; it is a structural quality of the language itself. French is conspicuous for its resistance, German for its amenability to mistreatment. The formative principles, which constitute the spirit of a language, are by no means obvious; even academies need some *Geist* not to miss the *Geist* of the language in their care.

A society creates a new word or modifies an old one to fit a certain situation. An unknown I and his You use it first. Others take it up. Its survival depends not merely on the need for a new word to denote a new thing or a new attitude, but also on whether the new word is in tune with the formative principle of the language. Only those that are, survive the circumstances that called them into being; most are dropped after a while.

A word imported from another language lives a lonely life at first. We treat it like an alien. Slowly a thousand invisible threads are woven around it; it changes color and tone; the spirit of the language conquers it. Now it enriches the language.

We cannot isolate the single word. Transplanted to another language, it is no longer the same word. By virtue of the spirit of the language which lives in every word, the word tinges its thing. It links the thing to other things and to the soul of man. Thus the word mediates not merely between the human being who uses it and the thing it denotes, but between the society that speaks the language and the whole of its world. The spirit of the language tinges the world. Hence we can hardly hope ever to understand the culture of a people whose language we cannot even read.

Many words are ambivalent: they do not demarcate their



things sharply—and not only because men's thoughts are confused and hazy. As the things themselves are linked to other things in diverse ways and transitions, the language surrounds the word with a penumbra of meanings and connotations in which relations to other things become half visible. Therefore the dictionaries often enumerate more than one meaning, even apparently contradictory meanings, for the same word. In the English word 'fast,' meaning both rapid and firm, the language is aware that things in rapid motion must have a firm grip on themselves. In 'discretion,' meaning the two gifts of silence and discernment, the language remembers a society in which men needed subtle discernment to know when to keep silent. The main meaning of each word is surrounded by ghosts. They flavor the word and, through the word, the thing. Part of this flavoring is due to the soft or hard, gentle or harsh, open or closed sounds, which carry intangible shades of feelings or movements of what we call the soul. Thus expression, communication, word and thing, man's soul and the climate of the world pervade one another. The single word, which in its insulated being hides its secret, reveals it in communion with other words—in the speech of those who know how to speak.

Linguists discriminate between the emotive and descriptive function of words. The distinction helps little unless we are told how the two functions are interrelated. This, indeed, is the spirit of all language and its power over man—that it brings to light the movement of the living subject and the persistence of the objective things, each in and through the other. Language is not confronted with two separate worlds, an inner and an outer world, which it occasionally relates. From the beginning the inner world is an outer, the outer an inner, world. If language tried to tell the tale of the inward soul apart from the outward world, it would hardly be language. If it severs an outer thing entirely from any relation to inward life, the outer thing dries up—and with it the spirit of the language.

Yet language is an instrument of communication for human beings who busily co-operate for diverse and changing pur-



poses. I am aware of the first man in the first cave using the first language to tell the first woman to put the first pot on the first fire. We use language even to advertise our soaps. But no sum of all such purposes exhausts the language. Much more and something else happens in our speaking. If something the purpose of which we cannot so easily identify did not mix into all these purposes, language would never have become language.

Inquiring into the evolution of languages, we find that each owes the formation and perfection of its unique spirit to poets, orators, and authors of sacred books. Modern man may wonder why. He would not if he still knew what the poet knows. Singing the deeds of men and their lot, he articulates man's existence in and through the world; he builds and lets the human soul permeate the world of things, bestowing visibility on man's inner life and life on the visible things. In such achievement the language attains its spirit. Information about things becomes expression of the soul; the soul's expression becomes report about things. In the poem the qualities of the words and the properties of things seek and find each other. As the words, the images of the things they designate, the shadows of others in their penumbra succeed one another, the sensuous qualities of vowels and consonants and their movements accompany the movements of images. Thus an agitated world comes to be—a world of things that clang, of sounds full of things.

Less than anything else can poetry be translated. Translation cannot help destroying the mutual relation between sound and thing, between the words and the shadows of their connotations. The main meanings of words may correspond; the side meanings correspond no longer, let alone the sounds and the qualities of things. The great translations of holy books are new creations by men in whose passionate souls the spirit of the language and a sacred tale communed.

The term 'spirit' should not suggest that language is the work of a living entity—*Geist*, reason, mind, consciousness—which in the language converses with 'nature.' The I is a



rather humble, poor, and needy Ego which stammers to reach a Tu; and with the Tu, the things; and finally to touch the horizon of a whole that embraces them all.

I turn from the spirit of the language to the situation in which this spirit shows itself. It is still, yet no longer, that of the lion and the nightingale.

Man longs for response in expression that is communication, in communication that is expression. Now expression and communication, together and in communion, can reach out beyond the movements of the anxious soul for the colorful many-shaped things, their relations to one another and to man. As man masters the signs that are no longer images, expression and communication can part company. Man becomes free to say what is not, and to create the vast realm of semblance and fake. Now he can talk and say a nothing about something that is nothing. He can—in uttering words—hide the things from both himself and others. Yet he can still seek the other man, spell the multifarious things and their stubborn order. He can still force the image of the world he builds to reverberate the misery and joy of human life. With such liberty man uses and misuses the language for all the partial purposes of a tricky and cunning animal. Language acquiesces.

Languages live in being spoken, not in dictionaries and grammars. The fate of spoken languages, as they bloom, decay, turn rank and rude, follows the fate of man's relation to man, thing, and world. When our world grows pale, pale grows the language we speak; when society ossifies, language ossifies. When language is merely artful play, it betrays the artificiality of a world. An empty world has but empty words. The word seeks the thing; and the passion of this search is the source of its power.

Hence we expect the way a society treats its language to betray this society's mental, moral, or spiritual state. Yet this correspondence is often obscured by the fixation of the inherited language in school and book, by the pressure of habit and tradition on the manner of speaking. Moreover, most speaking is tied to near and limited purposes: we isolate a pur-



pose and find nothing to censure in a speech that satisfies the purpose. Yet language does not disclose its life in isolated purposes. Whenever language is dominated by a partial purpose, it degenerates. Hence the universal phenomenon common to all ages and societies—the professional jargon of bureaucrats and lawyers; the one-sided purpose maims the language.

When an established society inherits an established world, and thought moves only in beaten tracks, speech changes slowly. Some subjects marry their adjectives. Meanings of habitual phrases are no longer courted. Everyone speaks as ‘they’ speak. The word loses the halo of its connotations, the penumbra of subtle hints, and finally the thing itself. The inanity of man’s relation to man ends in the inanity of the word. Man no longer seeks man, let alone the thing. The word has lost its life and power; no horizon becomes visible; an empty space gulps down the empty word.

Language serves deception and simulation. In this effort to seem what he is not, man may become a past master of sonorous phrases which, to the subtler ear, ring hollow. Many a public speaker would remain mute if he knew he was speaking to philologists. It is as if man could lie but language could not. Our speech ultimately unmasks us, though not to every ear and not in factual information about this or that. Whenever man pretends to reach the human soul, the nature of things, or the idea that embraces the whole, his language shows him up. The poets lie? The poets cannot lie lest they cease to be poets.

If life’s misery and want, chaining man to the truth of man and thing, permitted sham and lie to permeate the entire life of a society, the language such a society would speak would betray it to every ear. Any holder of power who, in order to manipulate confused masses, keeps lying, must corrupt the language. The official language of despotic power is empty. Hitler would have destroyed the German language as well as the German nation, if, outside the official sphere, the German language had not constantly been restored by men who, wrestling with the truth of things, sought another man’s truth.



The corruption of language is not merely unconscious and unwitting expression of the empty and coarse soul; it grows into a technique of power. Before they can be manipulated, the masses must be confused. This is done by the misuse of words which, as carriers of inherited meaning, link men to one another. The universe of response must be destroyed, words be deprived of their meaning. They must lose their things; things must lose their words. Finally man, as Confucius says, no longer knows how to use his hands and feet. He becomes helpless. This happens whenever a conscious technique of manipulation attains a monopoly.

When the universe of response fails to tie man to man and to things, the things to a horizon of a world, the world to an equivalent of gods, a society decays. Language decays with the decay of society. It is regenerated, grows again, regains its life and soul, when a new society builds up a new world. History abounds in examples, none greater than the growth, differentiation, formation of the French, Italian, and Spanish languages as new and elaborate structures from the Latin of the Roman soldier colonies.

In a stratified society the manners of speech of the higher and lower classes interact. While the language grows pallid in the polished boredom of the drawing room, it regains the color of blood in the laborer's hut. Toil toughens it and gracious leisure refines it; it may fare better in the interaction of the two than in a uniform smugness which lacks both the sweat of the one and the grace of the other. Even the French Academy, though concerned chiefly with defending the language of Voltaire against the slang of the suburbs, occasionally acknowledges the latter's formative power. In the tension between the tragedy of Aeschylus and the comedy of Aristophanes the language of Attica reached perfection.

The law that rules the relation between the spoken language and its society holds for all languages. It subjects all languages to the same fate, though the more or less established form, revered and transmitted, makes one language more resistant than another, for a while. The unity of this fate stems from the function of language in the pattern of all social life.

Whatever purposes of language we enumerate, language



would not have become language were this list a mere sum. The man who commands, commands as a being able to pry or conjure. He distinguishes things as a being who longs for response to his feelings. He does the one with respect to the other. An abstract Adam may confine himself to telling Eve to put the pot on the fire; any concrete Adam faces his concrete Eve as a being whom he may love or hate, desire or despise. All this is silently present in his request. The tone, the sequence of his words, reveal his feeling; he must make an effort to hide it. His speech occurs within the unity of a dynamic context we call life. Life binds together command and prayer, love, hate, and indifference. Language lives in this dynamic unity of life, in which all the possibilities of the human soul tacitly accompany the one that happens to be the present actuality.

Here and there human speech reaches perfection. Then man delights in his language. It is as if language itself enjoyed its triumph—English in Shakespeare's verses, German in Goethe's lyrics, Greek in Sappho's songs. Of course, this joy is but man's joy in speaking and hearing perfect speech. A glimmer of this happiness still flickers through the night of human misery that now can at least be told. One and the same principle rules all speaking. It is the same perfection, and for the same reason, whether we speak perfect English or perfect French. In each language 'the poet's words softly knock at the gates of paradise' by virtue of the same power, though they lose this power when translated.

The common root of this perfection is what in such speech occurs between man, thing, and world. Speaking means 'saying something to somebody about something.' There is the one who speaks and the one who listens; a something that is said and a something about which something is said. Perfection of the language, and its deficiencies too, stem from the interrelation of these four.

In perfect speech the individual shows himself as a distinct, unique, autonomous being. Perfect speech, however impersonal its content, bears the imprint of the speaker; a man speaks—this one man. Gently weaving an invisible net or rush-



ing tempestuously, perfect speech forces the other man to listen as a You by revealing the I as an I. Thus it creates a We—though the speaker and the hearer may be unknown to each other, speaking be writing, and hearing reading. Yet this will not happen unless speech says something about something. The thing, spoken about, was hitherto beclouded. Now its shape and nature become visible. In the shades of color and light that play around it, the I, in showing the thing, shows himself to the You. Thus when in perfect speech the thing begins to shine, it throws a gleam of light on the vault of a sky which, if only for a moment, seems to span a world. Now only does language itself enjoy its supreme happiness.

These criteria of perfect speech are not man-made. They do not depend upon the whim of society. A particular society may forget but it cannot alter them. They spring together with language from life's passion for life in an animal that is able to speak.







## PART FOUR

### *The Passions*

*Man, thing, and world are related to one another as relata of a relational context. In this context whatever lives is alive. These relata—the I, You, We, thing, and world—are merely points of a preliminary orientation. They outline a meager skeleton. Their relations are still empty. Life is concrete only in the particularity of their specific relations. Such relations are manifold, changing within a wide range of possibilities. In their change misery becomes joy, joy misery. The hidden rules that govern their change determine the immutable in man.*

*Hence, in a third step I turn from the general relationships of the relata to the particularity of their relations. What are these specific relations? I look for them in an area that can scarcely be circumscribed, let alone divided into clean-cut parts—the area of what we are accustomed to call sentiments, passions, emotions, attitudes, moods, or movements of the so-called ‘soul’. Though psychology deals with them under different headings and titles, all have to do with the relations of man to himself, to other men, to things, and to the world, and can be identified and differentiated in terms of such relations. All languages have a variety of words for such dispositions or movements of the soul—want, desire, enjoyment,*



*delight, habit, disgust, care, fear, hope, anger, rage, pride, humility, reverence, devotion, love, hate, envy, and countless others. Their meanings may flicker, the concrete manifestation of the reality they try to reach may undergo infinite changes. Some, if not all, of these words claim that at least a nucleus of meaning persists in the change of societies.*

*Words are unreliable. They are incomplete. Many a mood has no name. When we wish to describe it we are compelled to combine several words and are never sure that our combination does not denote the unity of a distinct feeling that deserves a name all its own. The phenomena designated by these words blend in manifold ways. There are gaps between the words. The cuts could be made at other places. Different languages cut differently. Hence neither the words of different languages nor the gaps correspond.*

*In this situation all languages resort to a certain ambiguity of their words. Their edges are not sharp. Around their main meanings play shadows in which other co-meanings or side meanings become half visible. This is a virtue, not a vice, of language. Through this virtue the words, if treated with some care, skill, caution, and with respect for their shades, can gently court intangible things.*

*The phenomena these words denote have always and still put awkward questions. They are accepted as irreducible data of consciousness, unsusceptible to further analysis. Or they are treated as 'irrational'. Yet things are irrational only relatively to a specific ratio. The poverty of man's 'ratio' lets sentiments be irrational.*

*They are called subjective. Science, however, aims at 'objectivity'. In the customary usage of these terms two meanings blend that should be kept apart. Feelings may be called 'subjective' because they belong to the subject or because they are exposed to the subjectivity of the observer. In the first sense they belong to the object under observation, which in this case is man as subject. The second meaning cannot impair the first: science must recognize feelings as part of the objective reality though it may be difficult to eliminate the subjectivity of the observer. Science begins by respecting the subject matter.*



By calling these phenomena irrational and subjective, we stress their inaccessibility. Yet they hold tight in their fists the key to the door that facts easier of access and objectively verifiable by anyone cannot open.

I do not intend, nor do I claim, to propound a theory of human passions. I search for what is immutable and what is mutable in man. The history that is known to us teaches how astoundingly stable man's main passions are. This stability poses a question.

What is immutable in man is the unity of a relational structure that binds all human reality. I look for it in man's passions. I use the term passion in its widest sense, not in the narrow sense in which movements of the soul are called passions only when they overpower 'reason' or a central will in man. I choose those in which a main meaning of their name seems to reach through the individual situation of this or that man or the historical situation of this or that society or culture and its interpretation of man to a dynamic context underlying all human reality.

This dynamic context is a relational structure. It is unity of a fabric. The single relation, be it between man and thing or between man and man or man and world, cannot be isolated. Each is what it is in conjunction with all the others. In the concrete case all are interwoven. Whichever seems absent remains present—in want and desire. Possible lack accompanies all having. Hence it is not true that one passion has to do only with the relation of man to man. In each all the other relations are present. The concrete case of any single relation interlaces all relata of the context.

This, however, is a minor part of the difficulties to be expected. The single passion can no more be isolated than the single relation. The various passions too accompany one another as possibilities of man. The carefree being, merely playing with the girls or abandoning himself to a moment's delight in the clouds around the sun, is carefree but as a being of care. He may find it out tomorrow. Man, capable of pride is as a man capable of some kind of humility, of some kind of hate



*and love, of some kind of fear and shame, or some patience and impatience as well.*

*The passions are born together in one birth of the same mother. To each all the others are co-present as possibilities of man though here and now they happen to be mute, hiding in the shadow of the manifest present. Moreover, even concrete pride here and now is never solely pride—actual pride alone with itself, accompanied merely by the shadow of the possible which at the moment is not actual. Even into this actual pride mingles some actual humility, love, hate, and fear, claiming a part of the concrete reality and a share in the description of the particular case.*

*If, despite these and other difficulties, I search for immutable and mutable man in these passions I am conscious of the many hurdles such an endeavor is sure to encounter.*



## *Chapter 1*

# PATIENCE AND IMPATIENCE

I BEGIN with some movements of the human heart that have to do, though in different ways, with time; they and their changes may help to articulate man's being in time, its unalterable frame, and its many variations.

'Inbetween' patience and impatience is man as long as he lives—driven to be impatient, compelled to be patient. No one will contest the identity of a nucleus of meaning of these two words throughout all peoples and ages. Man, in need, in his wishes and desires, is directed toward something—whatever it may be. As a directed being, surrounded by things that move, in something that moves, he moves toward something he desires. Thus he is 'on the way' from some not having to some having—forever, though for the moment he may stand still or make no headway. Yet beside and in this 'being on the way' is a different 'being on the way': a time that relentlessly proceeds, carries the 'now' in which we are from a yesterday to a tomorrow, whether we like it or not. These two kinds of 'being on the way' may conflict. Tomorrow may or may not bring us what we desire.

In time we wait and act. Waiting and acting we learn the double meaning of 'being on the way'.

I wait on the corner of a street for my beloved. I count the minutes or force myself not to count them. All my count-



ing does not speed up the slow step of time. Instead of the minutes I count the leaves that one after the other fall from the tree. Before the appointed hour my desire runs ahead of time. The hour passes; I am still waiting. Now I want to hold back the fleeting time in which my hope fades—but time marches on and does not care. So I argue with merciless time, with myself, with the beloved—inbetween patience, to which time compels me, and impatience, which I cannot conquer.

In action man rushes into the arms of the next moment. This moment is his, at his disposal. Thus he is the master of time, grateful that it marches, pushing into the present the object of his desire. However, time does not belong to him alone. Others may steal his moment; hence his haste. Fear of missing the moment drives him on. If he misses it, he must again wait patiently for his moment, watching the course of things in time.

In both waiting and acting, man is inbetween patience and impatience. When impatience breaks through patience, and man, acting or waiting, lugs and tugs at the rope of a time that carries him along whatever he does, he will feel the chains in which he flutters to and fro—the powerless powerful man.

In his treatise on time Aristotle mentions a controversy over whether time is stupid or wise.<sup>1</sup> He sides with a Pythagorean *Parson* who called Time stupid because in time we forget. Time, by itself, Aristotle means, is responsible rather for the passing away than for the being and coming to be of things—the latter only accidentally. Sufficient proof is that nothing comes to be without striving and acting whereas whatever stands still perishes.

To the twofold meaning of 'on the way' corresponds in many languages a twofold sense of 'end': end as the goal we strive for and end in time, the death to which we are carried against our will. This twofold sense is not laxness on the part of language. It reflects the twofold meaning of 'on the way'. Though τέλος as end in time is not τέλος as fulfillment of my striving, the two are bound by an iron law. As beings that die



we strive; as beings that strive we die. "What does not agree agrees." <sup>2</sup>

Time brings us what we desire and what destroys us, takes from us what we possess and what pains us. *Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ μενέω καί τλήσομαι*—"I remain and endure", Odysseus says.

Time appears in two aspects: inner time, the time-consciousness of man joining memory and expectation in one present; and external time, the time of the world in which we live. It orders all births and deaths in a single file of before, between, and after 'in the measures of number'. The time of time-consciousness is one: the past is past-to-a-present, the present is present-to-a-future, the future is future-to-a-present, the present is present-to-a-past—in the relentless chase of pushing and pulling nows which hurry on and off.

The relation of inner to external time, or of the time of time-consciousness to cosmic time, of subjective to objective time is a thorny problem of philosophy. Under the aspect of a being who acts and is acted upon, each time is for itself empty—to be concrete time each needs the other. Man's acting and being acted upon refers the one to the other in the unity of a context. Man is man in a world; in a world he acts and is acted upon. His consciousness of time is conscious of many other things in space that are not he himself. From the beginning his nows, which are hooked, preserved, anticipated in one another and their mutual reference to one another—subjective time—is referred to an order of positions in the time dimension of an objectified world extended in space and time, the order of events in their before, between, and after.

Man's 'being in time' is unity of a fabric, woven by necessity. Nonetheless, within this fabric, it is open to change. Life engenders patience and impatience together. Man shares them with animals; he would share them even with plants if he would condescend to concede to plants an awareness, however hazy, of drives, however dumb.

Man moves to and fro inbetween patience and impatience. As human possibilities that inhere in each other they are relations within a relational fabric. As they differ at any instant within individual life as well as in the change of history, it



seems as if their universal notions were confronted without mediating terms with an infinite and unordered diversity of concrete instances, each different from the other.

The concrete case interknits an unruly variety of variables. Patience and impatience are never alone. Fear, anxiety, hope, pride, humility, hate, love, mingle in and claim their part. Our descriptions are based upon objective things—actions, situations, objects of our desire. As we observe the same man in different situations or different men in the same situation to be more or less patient or impatient, we are left with an indefinite diversity of situations and characters.

And not only that: in every age and culture individual life runs the gamut from an extreme patience to an extreme impatience, as circumstances, characters, and desires change. Speaking loosely, we talk about patient and impatient ages, cultures, and peoples; of the patience of Asia, of the impatience of Europe. Usually we mean merely that the average man is more inclined to be patient or impatient. We look for a cause in circumstances, traits, desires, that prevail in the average man, and may even discover some causes of that sort. So the peasant of an agricultural age, under the shade of patient trees, dependent upon the quiet rule of nature, will be more patient than the man of an industrial age who amid the maze of a confused and ever-changing world depends upon opportunities he or others take advantage of or miss. Yet in all this—above, behind, beside—the whole of man's relation to the world and its happenings changes with the change of cultures and ages. In this change the way man sees, feels, conceives of himself in time changes—the concept of time, the time-feeling of an historical culture. In trying to inquire into this elusive change I turn to the interrelation of memory and expectation.

Man, moving in time, retains his identity with himself. His reality, even the reality of his present, stretches out into the past and into the future. Although in a certain sense he is really 'real' only now, in another sense he is forever still something that he is no longer and already something that he is not yet.



The wandering now of the present carries with it a past we remember and a future we expect. A changeable present changes the past we remember and the future we expect, each with respect to the other. Our memory and our expectation mold and remold each other with reference to the other.

We want to remember and must forget. We want to forget and cannot help remembering. Though our power over our remembering and forgetting is limited, we are always at work—with dubious success—to remember and forget, to select, interpret, revise, transform. What we call our 'history' is the past of our present with respect to our future.

Man has more than one past: the past he actually remembers, several others he could remember, and a forgotten past vanished forever. As we carry our past into our future, the past changes; we resurrect a half-forgotten past or even build an imaginary one that has never been our past. This holds for the individual, the family, the clan, the tribe, and the modern nation. All are driven by a strange interest in a meaningful continuity to justify the present by the past, the past by the present, and by both a future they claim. A second love—and the lover's image of his first love changes. A new environment and a new activity—we alter both memory and expectation and try to fit a past we remember to a future we expect, albeit forever as serfs of a past we cannot forget.

Any revolutionary power modifies the past men should remember before it undertakes to alter the future. Competing political parties support their conflicting ideas about the future by conflicting interpretations of the past.

In individual as well as in social life all acting, feeling, and thinking occur in the course of a formative process in which man continually shapes and reshapes his memories and expectations in a thousand tensions. Autobiographies, confessions, myths, national legends; scholarly, unscholarly, or literary history—all move within a wide range, inbetween respect for and disregard of stubborn facts, choosing, twisting, interpreting. We can scarcely single out the share of the parents in the countless children error begets on truth, wish on honesty.

For a while an ossified image of the past refuses to be ad-



justed to a changing present. A new image of the future fights the power of the past over the present—a rigid present may compel memory and expectation to stand still. Yet forever past and future, the reality that was and the reality that will be, rigidity and flexibility of memory and expectation will wrestle with each other.

There are static societies little aware of their history. The present repeats itself in the cycle of births and deaths. So it seems. Yet the so-called primitive societies are not the beginning. They are petrified products of history, in the grip of a combined pressure of nature, political and priestly power. They too change. No cycle repeats the preceding cycle in its entirety; habits become more and more habitual—even ossification is change. Such societies are old. They are not virginal nature that is not yet history.

While the individual grows in years, the way in which the remembered past and the expected future interact changes. When the sun is descending toward the evening of life, the shades of the past are growing longer; the quantity of things remembered increases, of things expected decreases. But this stupid quantity does not matter; the power of memory over expectation is strengthened, the power of expectation over memory weakened. 'Young' and 'old' denote not simply the number of our years. When we call a young man old and an old man young we mean a distinct attitude that does not correspond to the number of years. While the past tightens its grip, a shorter future to a longer past demands less and less and elicits weaker and weaker desires. What little is still to be expected should be of a kind already known. Tiring eyes no longer look avidly into the unknown, full of curiosity and keen on surprises. The aging individual qua individual no longer hears the challenge of a future. Since only the plasticity of the future we expect can sustain the plasticity of the past we remember, a rigid expectation makes our memory rigid. The slave of habits resents change. The garrulous prisoner of stale memories repeats his stories. Without a future to color its cheeks, the past grows pale.



Yet there is the mighty old man, powerful in passion, knowledge, will, words, and stubbornness, always admired, seldom loved. Devotion to a cause makes passion, desire, and expectation reach beyond death. A heart is steeled by long effort, scars are hardened—knowledge of misery and grief and manifold changes—curbed will is accumulated—approaching death, removing all petty concerns, gives the deeper view, the wider range—life's last victory over death.

Homer in Priam, Sophocles in Oedipus Coloneus set up an image of mighty old age. When in the life of the artist who nears death a more profound knowledge joins a still burning passion, the artist, in a style of old age—bolder, purer, wider—surpasses his best work. It happened to Rembrandt, Titian, Michelangelo, Beethoven. It is the privilege of the very few who are the greatest.

In youth, as far as it is young, expectation guides memory. A future, long and tied to a past that is short and narrow, is open for surprises. Hope stronger than fear surrounds the unknown with an aura of gold. Youth has more to lose and is bold. Old age has little to lose and is cautious, as hope has no power. Youth easily forgets what it wants to forget. Wounds heal quickly. Yet youth is far more vulnerable. As old age has little healing power, its wounds leave deeper scars. Vulnerable youth needs protection, first of all against wounds that impair the power of hope and give memory power over expectation.

Few old remain young; the young who are old are more numerous. Theirs is the complacent attitude of a too early stabilized world. They forget their human right to a will of their own. Not a few societies want just that and call it education. They protect themselves against its surprises which, however socially inconvenient, would keep them young.

Birth and death, a first and last breath, belong to individual life. Societies, so it seems, braving time, can remain in a state of permanent maturity. In the universe of questions and answers, care and work, the young and the old learn and exchange each other's aspects. The long expectation and short memory of the young, the short expectation and long memory



of the old converse; agreeing and disagreeing, responding to each other, together they weave the tissue of a still common world. Mutual response modulates the discord of individual perspectives. Society requires and elicits from the young a kind of memory of a development before their birth, from the old a kind of expectation beyond their death.

We can hardly avoid calling one society young, another old. We mean a relative weight of petrified customs. Yet we should be aware that societies can remain young and need not grow old, and even when old, can become young again. They are in a continuous process of both ossification and rejuvenation. So is individual man. But whereas in individual life ossification gets the better of rejuvenation, a society can ossify and rejuvenate more than once. Yet societies too can reach a final petrified state from which there is no return. Memory has enslaved expectation. A rigid tradition answers all questions and leaves no alternatives. The future repeats the past. When it does not, such a society perishes.

Some small towns of even a modern nation in the vigor of its youth may include societies that grow old in a few decades. After a while the wider society will engulf, rejuvenate, or dissolve them.

Men differ in their capacity to live in the present, which alone is real. In life the present is not merely the marching cut that severs the future from the past. Past and future blend in the unity of a greater now, in which one You embraces memory and expectation and a moment's moment stands still. Whereas in some societies men live in the past, their eyes turned backward, in some in a future they expect, in others men give themselves to the present with all their forces and drink to the last drop the cup of its joy and grief. This holds for societies as well as for individuals.

The man of the industrial age, in his busy activities never wholly present to his present and living already in his success of the morrow, is mistaken if he assumes that man owes the greatest works of culture to his preoccupation with the future. Man owes them to his full surrender to the intensity of a present.



Societies, like individuals, are patient in one situation, impatient in another. Their life too moves to and fro between patience and impatience. Nonetheless, our talk of Asia's patience and Europe's impatience has a definite meaning.

A society, as a universe of mutual response, develops in the course of its history a specific kind of relation between memory and expectation, of both to the presence of the present. Response reaches further or nearer backward or forward. The spans of time in which a society thinks and feels are longer or shorter. The power of memory over expectation, of expectation over memory that pervades the universe of response can differ. In one case the present now seems to be pushed reluctantly away by the next now which hastens to replace it; in another, the next now seems to be called upon to push the present now into the night of the past. The relation to time is a universal variable of historical life. It is, though not easily accessible, one of the most important variables for anyone who, comparing ways of life, societies, cultures, or ages, wishes to reach human existence behind the mutable things. The difference between the patience and impatience of societies and cultures springs from a relationship to time which is mostly inherited and guides man's struggle with the present and its demands.

The specific pattern of this relationship to time slowly takes shape in the course of the history of a society. Limping behind the demands of the situation, it changes tardily and fails to give an ear to many things circumstances seem to require. It gets stabilized in the cosmic image of a culture or society. 'Subjective' time, the time of time-consciousness, comes to be the objective time of a subjective, that is, historical, cosmos and in it finds its image. Only so do distinct forms become accessible and comparable.

Societies or cultures build 'worlds'—wholes that, embraced by man embrace man, his things, and his gods. A horizon of such a world echoes their responses. The image of this world and its order guides their interpretation of man and his existence. This world, expanded in space, is extended in time. It can do this, however, in manifold ways. Time can be



thought of as coming from and going into the infinite. A wheel of birth and death can be thought of as turning in a space that stands still, merely repeating a life that is forever the same. A finite time can begin on the first day of creation, end on the day of the last judgment, and lead from the one to the other in an arc whose zenith is the Saviour's life. Time can be thought of as ascending to a 'bigger and better' or an ultimate promise, or as descending step by step from a golden age. Such an ascent or descent, preassumed and guiding all experience yet to be, will be thought of as belonging to the form of time itself, not merely to an accidental content; as preassumed necessity it stabilizes the power, on the one hand, of expectation over memory, on the other, of memory over expectation. Instead of putting all emphasis either on a past to be retained or on a future that is promised, a culture can ascribe merely a shadowlike reality to both past and future as being no longer and not yet, see only in the present the full reality shining up for a moment as visible appearance and drink in all its joy and misery. Then, the long countless time, as Sophocles says, brings to light what is hidden and hides again what was revealed.<sup>3</sup> The design of time, stabilized in the cosmic image of a culture, pervades as half-unconscious feeling or half-conscious conception the universe of question and answer, work and care. It dominates the style of political action and can become political destiny.

The Attic empire, given to and living in the splendor of the present, acting from situation to situation, and capable of only brief caring and planning, breaks down. The Roman legions march in steadier step from a past clenched in firmer hands toward a more distant future. What holds for Attica and Rome can hold also for the nations of today. They too differ in the steadiness or restiveness with which their armies march into the future or their statesmen think and plan. *Ab urbe condita* are the years counted in Rome. So Rome becomes the eternal city. In Olympiads time is counted in Hellas, the Panhellenic gatherings in Olympia being the conspicuous moments of a glamorous present. So Hellas perishes, and leaves us the brightest and most intense images.



Within a civilization change in the conception of time differentiates periods. Isaiah separates a postprophetic from a preprophetic period. More than many other things the change in the conception of time separates the Christian world from the pagan. If the reception of Aristotle should be used in periodizing the Middle Ages, the part he played in the change of time feeling will have to be called upon to justify such a role.

I turn back from the patience and impatience of peoples to the life of individuals. Each individual in his own way is inbetween the impatience bred by desire or fear and the patience enforced by compulsion or made possible by hope—in every society and culture. When we say some times, societies, cultures are conspicuous for patience, others for impatience, we do not mean that the impatient ones do not know patience or the patient ones do not know impatience, or that patient Russia never had an impatient government or the impatient German Reich a patient government, or that individuals, thinking and acting as individuals will follow in each situation the pattern of their society. The relation to time, stabilized in a cosmic image, guiding the universe of discourse, may make it more easy or more difficult for individuals to be patient as individuals; it may determine their way of talking and of rationalizing their patient and impatient behavior—not more. When, however, the individual speaks about his society, people, or country, it will become manifest that the Russian peasant, conspicuous for his patience, has Russia reach from a long past into a remote future that in any event will belong to Russia, a big country with a long breath; and that it will not matter whether Russia gets Constantinople now or in fifty years.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, even a German of the second or third Reich who had been patient as an individual may in his talk or thought about the German destiny have shown the impatience of a nation that, united too late and always in a precarious situation, is dominated by the constant fear that it will come too late.

These hasty remarks hardly touch upon the complexity of the subject. The mutable relation of mutable cultures to time



is an endless problem. Each instance I mentioned requires a difficult inquiry, to be undertaken with utmost caution and with respect to the entire culture. However that may be, the search for the historical variations of patience and impatience by no means ends in simply confronting a universal nucleus of the meanings of the words with an infinite variety of situations and characters. From the nucleus of a common meaning, inherent in the fabric of human existence, to the infinite variety of concrete cases leads a ladder with many rungs of specifications. It is not sufficient to place infinite variables side by side and combine them without rules or by changing rules that cannot be mastered. These variables are ordered in groups and layers. Those that are universal and co-present in any concrete situation are interrelated from the beginning—in the fabric of life. They may not be manifest and easily accessible; we must uncover them ere we can hope to grasp the particular in its particularity.

Man's being-in-time is merely the changeless frame. Mutable man's variations of this being-in-time, confined within this frame, permeate all passions, moods, attitudes, and make them at any specific moment flicker in the sheen of a specific tissue in which colorful threads are interwoven in a unique pattern.



## *Chapter 2*

# FEAR AND HOPE

**I**N A PRESENT, pushed off again at every moment, man, in his needs and desires, pries into a future he does not know—inbetween fear and hope.

Hope and fear seem to be indefinitely mutable. Yet in any interpretation of human life in any image of the world of man a nucleus of a meaning known to everyone outlives all change.

Man's fear is of something and for something—of this or that event, for his life, health, children, money, job. The particularity of the something of and the something for which we are afraid and their interrelation seems to determine the specificness of our fear. Since fear cannot be separated from this 'of' and 'for', there seem to be as many kinds of fear as there are things of which and for which we feel fear. Like fear, hope is always of or for something.

This seemingly infinite variety deceives us. The abstract objects and events, posited for themselves as objective and isolated, are irrelevant. They matter only by virtue of the different roles they play in the occurrence we call life. Although in an objective world extended in time and space, they may be thought to be indefinitely variable, the variations of their roles in and functions for the life of man remain bound to the fabric of human existence and confined to its



frame. In this fabric they can be compared. Hence, whoever wants to surrender any sameness of fear as fear or hope as hope to the infinite diversity of the objective things of and for which we feel hope and fear, will have to show that the differences in these objects preclude a similarity or sameness of their functions. Since no concrete fear or hope is ever simply fear or hope, alone with itself, but is in each case and always mingled with other movements of the human soul—pride or love, hate or shame—the specificness of objects, situations, events, pervades their functions and roles. It is this specificness that weaves pride, awe, shame, and love into our fear and hope. Thereby, however, a fundamental structure interknits all these different movements of the human soul. As a being capable of pride, awe, and love, man fears and hopes.

Hence, fear and hope, however inseparable from their objects, and by virtue of their specificness mingling with other feelings, obey a great many universal rules which, like fear and hope themselves, have their origin in the texture of man's existence. These rules are part of a *logique du coeur*. Everyone knows them in his heart. The heart too has its logic. The rules of this logic too are immutable. I shall be content to recall some of these rules from the memory of the heart to the memory of the intellect. Fear and hope imply each other. The most fearless man fears as long as he hopes. The man without hope still hopes as long as he fears. No being can live without a minimum of fear and hope, however remote.

Fear and hope entwine in various ways. They argue with each other. Hope will impose silence on fear; fear will teach hope to be afraid of defeat. They wrangle over the degree of uncertainty that clouds the future. Both magnify the probability of the event to fear or hope for. Fear is of near dangers and does not peer far into the future. When it does, we call it care or worry. Hope, however, flies ahead of time and lights beyond the foreseeable. Fear without hope is without power to act; hope without fear is blind. Only together—fleeing, bridling, restraining each other—can they accomplish great things.

Yet fear and hope, whether single or together, are never



alone. Man in rage is oblivious of danger. Strong desire inspires hope against hope. The sensuous impression of a danger makes us tremble in fear; intellectual fear we can conquer.

The nature of our fear and hope depends upon our ability to act. The fear of one who can do something about a threat is different from the fear of one who, defenseless, must bide his time. Again the same holds of hope. The hope of the acting and the hope of the waiting man differs.

The courageous man is not without fear. Courage is man's power over his fear. Hence the answer of the soldier to his colonel who accuses him of being afraid: "Sir, if you were as afraid as I, you would have run away long ago."

As man is inbetween knowledge and ignorance, all his fears and hopes differ in the extent to which the things to be afraid of or hoped for are known or unknown. Knowledge suggests action.

An event hoped for or feared may be relevant for only a specific wish or limited interest. This is partial fear or hope. The relevance of the role the part plays in the context of the whole changes not only the quantity but also the quality of fear and hope.

There is, on the one hand, total fear—with respect to our entire existence. Fear of death is by no means the only total fear. To total fear no total hope corresponds. A finite being can come to naught; it cannot be all. Hope resents this inequality and dreams of an eternal life in the sight of God.

The generalized man, of whom I seem to talk, stands for every individual. The individual, however, is never only an individual. Men fear and hope with, as well as for, one another. Your hope kindles mine; your fearlessness gives me courage. Peoples as peoples can be overwhelmed by fear, inspired by hope.

Knowledge and ignorance, real or imaginary, ability or inability to act, is not only knowledge and ignorance or ability and inability to act of the individual as individual. You know the danger, yet are not afraid. I rely on your knowledge. The child, confronted with an unknown object, looks at its mother. Under her protection curiosity overcomes fear. We



investigate the things and form our ideas of their order not in solitary experience, alone with ourselves. We take on the role of the others and look at the things with their eyes no less than with our own. It is astonishing how much fright and danger the soldier can endure when there is a slight hope, when he can defend himself and fight, when he identifies the danger, when others are fighting by his side. In respect to one another, each a You and part of a We, soldiers face death, though each must finally die his death separately, alone with himself. The scream of panic—*sauve qui peut*—dissolves this mutual relation and leaves everyone to shift for himself. Only then is fear victorious. Someone screams 'fire' in a theater and rushes to the nearest exit. There may be none or merely a tiny blaze. If the others run and push, the key words are not imitation, contagion, or suggestion. These words merely hid a gap in our thought. In a crowd individuals act as individuals. The first scream, the rush of someone to the exit sets off for each individual a chain of signals indicating an increasing danger whose cause and nature he does not know. Each, assuming the other knows what happened, runs. Panic feeds on ignorance; if everyone saw the danger, even greater danger might arouse less fear.

In the master-serf relation fear seems to be the privilege of the serf, fearlessness the duty of the master. No aristocracy excuses the fear of the master; even the serf does not excuse it. The fearlessness of the master, the fear of the serf, justify the serfdom of the serf, the dominance of the master.

Any officer knows that to evince fear will undermine his authority more quickly than any other mistake he may make. It is not the feeling but the showing of fear that will be blamed. Fear that is expressed is no longer under control; it impairs action and destroys the power of example. Hence, quite a few masters cultivate fear in the serf to support their domination, just as many serfs admire and demand from the master a fearlessness that helps them conquer their fear.

The objects of fear and hope, the yardsticks of danger and misery, of security and happiness, undergo all sorts of change in the life of the individual as well as of the group. The single thing, though when isolated it seems to be the same, is never



entirely the same. It is what it is as a figure on a ground, seen together with other figures. The ground changes: small evils will be big, big evils small. A good thing that yesterday seemed too assured to call for hope may tomorrow be beyond the bounds of hoping. All security of man, born insecure, is relative. Ages of security, forgetting insecurity, magnify the dangers that remain and produce new objects of and reasons for fear that insecure ages would belittle.

Whereas fear is felt for a definite thing or event, anxiety is felt about something unknown, indefinite, perhaps not even identifiable. As we do not know what to fear we have no defense. Hence the power of anxiety can exceed the power of fear and lead to madness. Its power is not only power over the individual as individual. As anxiety must act to conquer itself and can act only blindly, collective anxiety, acting blindly, can doom a society.

Everyone has felt this kind of anxiety, though perhaps only in childhood, at night alone in a wood. Leaves rustle and fright seizes us. Darkness deprives all things of their shape and contour which in daylight confirm the reliable order of all the things on this well-rounded earth. Unknown, strange happenings seem possible, not only robbers and animals but also spirits and the voice of the dead. Two children silently guarantee each other the regular order.

What we call our knowledge is not simply an aggregate of things and events we are familiar with; at its bottom is knowledge of a real or imaginary order of the possible—a schema of space and time, of relations between the contents of space-time, an order governed by rules. This order we trust. In it we assign a place to this and that thing. This place determines what the thing 'is'. Now we imagine we know the thing. On the basis of this order, within its rules, we act.

The unknown can be of two kinds: something whose place in the preassumed order of all things we do not know, although it certainly has a place—the something behind the tree that may be a gangster or a tiger; or something that does not have any place in this order and therefore menaces it, depriving



man of any hold. The latter gives rise to total anxiety. In the so-called anxiety neurosis the human being is bereft of the frame of reference within which he thinks and acts. A fright—an event beyond anything familiar, not fitting any order, not to be mastered, not even identified or expressed—may be the origin. The moment passes; yet man has become aware of an extreme possibility; the fear that such an attack of anxiety might happen again persists. The slightest cause: again everything shakes and the chasm reopens. Such anxiety can be worse than any fear of death.

Even a modern society can fall victim to this fear of the unknown. In a period of relative stability it has built up a system of matter of courses of what is possible and can be expected in this world of ours. This system is the unquestioned basis of the universe of discourse, though it may be full of fictions. It is stabilized and tends to become rigid. Things happen that cannot be understood, find no answer, seem not to have any place in the system, or even run counter to some of its fundamental axioms. An utter insecurity grips the society and, even if overcome, is long remembered.

The pseudoscientific frame of reference of the mass society of today, full of fictitious matters of course concerning the economic and political realities, exposes modern man more to collective anxiety than do religious or magic systems which, in the inscrutable will of God, in the interference of spirits and demons, in magic and prayer, have ready a line of explanation and possible action. The world of the religious man does not break down—hence its greater power of resistance.

In modern philosophy this anxiety has been interpreted as man's fear of the nothing, the nothingness of which 'be-nothings' him. This interpretation is misleading. 'Nothing' is ambiguous. There are several varieties of nothingness. At any rate, the nothingness man faces in total anxiety is a peculiar nothingness. It is in no way the honest and relatively harmless *nihil absolutum*. As it is nothing but nothingness, the only harm this *nihil absolutum* can do to man is to swallow him up. In total anxiety the nothingness we face is still something—we know not what. It is something, though different from



anything we know and can know. Thus it is, if any, relative nothingness. It is absolute otherness. Absolute otherness has a definite logical meaning. There are degrees of otherness. The other thing can be another thing to the one, that is, to myself, my other thing. Together with me it belongs to a whole. This whole can be wider or narrower—within the greater or smaller whole another thing is closer to or further from me, more familiar or strange. Hence, even the strangest thing I know is still a thing of the whole I call 'my world'.

In total anxiety we face absolute otherness, outside of any order we could grasp, a something no longer identifiable yet still something. This something is worse than any 'nothing'. In total anxiety there is no hope; hence no protection. In total otherness not even hope finds something it could gild with a golden shimmer. Though fear did not make the gods—at least not all of them and never as fear alone—priestly power understood, always and everywhere, how to put in the place of the fear of the unknown the fear of a vaguely known demon or devil, and so how to join hope to this fear and to combine for both this fear and hope devices of acting—in prayer, magic, ritual, and sacrifices. If there is any fear that can claim a part in the origin of religions, it is the fear of total anguish. Against it religion protects the soul of man.

The times of religious decay, when many gods and their hosts of priests quarrel, of confusion, superstition, and competing magics are ages of anguish. The Christians of the Roman Empire, sure of their one God and the order of their prayers and holy actions, deride the anguish of the pagans.<sup>5</sup>

Fear of death, man's greatest fear, most spoken of, most difficult to be talked away, mingles man's fear of dying with his reluctance to be dead. Whatever lives fears death and must fear it as long as it lives. Man, knowing he must die, shoves back the thought. The man who dies today or tomorrow is someone else. I shall die later, not yet. That is life's self-defense. So we feel the full fear of death only in the nearness of death. Our brains indeed may anticipate the fear our heart will feel. But this fear of the brains is merely



a shadow of the real fear of death. Reason argues forever against the fear of death and calls on pride, vanity, love of glory, for help—with dubious success. Whatever lives loves to live. Whatever 'is' craves to be.

Man dies as an individual. At least the reality of dying would refute to the dying man, if life had not, the social theories that deny the individual. Even he who is willing to be submerged by the masses must die his own death alone. Fear of death is fear of the I for the I.

Although in the ultimate hour the I may be nothing but an I already detached from all things and soon from himself, a moment ago he was more than an I. Dying Isaac blesses Esau and Jacob. He still lives in his children's life and hopes for them. His death ends his hoping, not the things hoped for. The expectation of a better future for the family may console grandfather. We are told that news of victory makes dying easier for the soldier. All such consolation is limited. Isaac will not participate in Jacob's future rise.

But hope dies reluctantly. Man, refusing to be excluded from the world, wants to outlive himself. This desire takes two forms. In the living process of formation the living being is referred to himself, the determiner to the determined—*natura naturans* to *natura naturata*, an I to a Me, a subject to an object. As however, the two, the determiner and the determined, 'are' only with respect to each other, death puts an end to both. Their reference to each other is the life it ends.

As the unity of the I and the Me, man is part of a We, a He or a She. The I dies as an I; the You, the part of the We, the He, or She will be forgotten, though maybe not for a long time. Perhaps the human beings I call mine will address me in their dreams; though not the I, a Me, the distinct form I have been, will remain in their feeling and thoughts, they will tell each other that I said or thought or wrote this or that and would probably, if still alive, act in this manner or give that advice. I seem to remain a member of the larger group that embraces the living and the dead. Hence man's desire for glory.

Life's lust for life, however, asks for more. The will to



survive has still another form: the I, the determiner, should go on determining the thoughts and actions of others—even the I should survive, and not only for a while but for all eternity. This hope has the advantage over all other hopes, that it cannot be disappointed—there will be no one to be disappointed.

To the martyrs this hope was certitude of expectation. It removed the fear of being dead, though not the fear of death. It may have eased even the fear of dying, since the physical pain of a cruel way of dying opens the heavenly doors.

Only the body should die; the soul is immortal; 'soul', that is, in the oldest definition, self-movement. A being capable of self-motion has a soul. It may be hard to admit that a being of this kind should be able to come to be and compelled to pass away. The 'soul' might rather take on different forms and wander through the bodies of plants and animals.

The crux of all controversies over immortality is not the eternity of life but the identity of the surviving soul with itself. Plato is well aware that Socrates' proof for the immortality of the soul suggests only the eternal movement of life, not the identity of the individual soul with itself. This identity is no great concern of Socrates himself—it is his loving young friends who want the individual soul of their Socrates to survive.

What about the fear of being dead? In a note to an early writing, Schelling argues that man does not fear his not being after death; he fears his being able to feel his not being.<sup>6</sup>

Whatever such reasoning may be worth, in fear of death as in fear of being dead, the living being grieves over not-being. When Homer's dead heroes flutter around as bloodless shadows or Parmenides' dead see only the dark, feel only the cold, and hear only silence,<sup>7</sup> Life praises Life. This is Life's honesty toward Death.

Fear and hope as fear and hope of and for something vary with the something. Despite the specificness of these objects the diversity of fear and hope is not limitless. The objects are what they are by virtue of the role they play in human life.

The rules that have to do with the relation of fear and hope



to each other, to knowledge and ignorance, to the possibility and impossibility of action, or of the I to the Me, to a You and We, do not change with the change of objects of fear and hope. Since the concrete fear and hope of the single case can never be isolated as solely fear or hope, these rules will be but poor rules. The logos of the human heart interknits all the movements of the soul. The poor rules point to this logos. Only in the richness of this logos as a whole do they get rid of their poverty.

But in the change of men and things the yardsticks of danger and security, of the misery we fear or the joy we expect, change as well as the objects and reasons for fear and hope. No figure remains the same when the ground on which it stands amid other figures changes. Petty evils become gross, gross ones petty. All security is relative. It is amazing of and for what men, accustomed to long security, come to fear, or of and for what men in times of great insecurity feel little fear, or how in times of prosperity and security hope creeps along the floor of everyday life; what power the most modest hope can have in times of misery, or how easily hope reaches out beyond all reasonable expectation for the stars of a remote future. Familiarity with deep misery, with the sight of the horrible, shatters the power of hope and leaves little room for fear. Youth, returning from total war to burned-out towns, finding their homes destroyed and their friends dead or dispersed, will be fearless as well as hopeless. For a long time gentle images will have little power over their souls.



## Chapter 3

### CARE

WHAT IS 'CARE'? Such a question does not aim merely at defining the conventional usage of a word. The field of meaning extends from a kind of silent worrying to our careful attending to the welfare of things and beings under our care. In German the one word *Sorge* links *Furcht* and *Sorgfalt*. In Greek three words—φρόντις, ἐπιμέλεια, μέριμνα—stress different elements in our care: thought, action, and grief. But the German, feeling *Sorge* also thinks, acts, and grieves. And the Greek, feeling *Sorge*, cannot help linking together the three elements these three words differentiate.

In the *Iliad* (XVII, 45 ff.) young Euphorbus, son of Panthoös and the divine Phrontis, rushes into his first battle. He looks for Menelaus who slew Euphorbus' brother. His parents and their grief are before his eyes. He imagines himself laying Menelaus' head and weapons on his mother's lap to still her grief. He meets Menelaus, who warns him. In vain—they fight. Menelaus' spear pierces Euphorbus' neck. Euphorbus sinks to the ground; blood wets his curls which, like the locks of the Graces, are held together by bands of silver and gold. The poet goes on:

As when a man reareth some lusty sapling of an olive  
in a clear space where water springeth plenteously, a



goodly shoot fair-growing; and blasts of all winds shake it, yet it bursteth into white blossom; then suddenly cometh the wind of a great hurricane and wresteth it out of its abiding place and stretcheth it out upon the earth: even so lay Panthoös' son Euphorbos of the good ashen spear when Menelaos Atreus' son had slain him, and dispoiled him of his arms.<sup>8</sup>

It is a simple story. I have good reason for preferring the image of care it contains to any definition. The image leaves care in the unity of life where care is care—inbetween want, danger, death, love, and the delight of an I and a You in a world of a We. No definition can do this unless it is formulated in terms of just that unity. The image will be understood by everyone though it belongs to a particular culture and specific society which has olive trees, specific family ties, codes of fighting and of honor.

The poet makes the human situation shine through the particularity of the historical conditions. By virtue of the ahistorical or transhistorical transparency of history the poet will be understood by human beings who have nothing to do with olive trees, fighting, or knightly honor.

Life is mutable in many ways. The variables contained in the image are diverse in kind. They belong to different 'groups of transformation'. I can transform care into lack of care and retain the olive tree; I can replace the olive tree by a cow and retain care. We understand the care of olive trees from our own care for our cows unless, like animals, we are so tied to our objects that we cannot understand how someone could care for something unmilkable. The understanding of some men, like that of animals, is tied to their own things by habits of thinking and methods of learning.

Whereas the possibility of carelessness is present in my care—I could be careless—the possibility of the olive tree does not entail the possibility of the cow. This little difference has great consequences. It is only for the sake of care and carelessness that I am concerned with olive trees and cows.

Care is care for something. This something can be my precious soul, other human beings, an animal, an apple tree. He



who cares is attached to the thing he cares for. If care is to be care, the thing must be exposed, or seem to be, to some danger or harm. I ask for the what, not the why, of care. In the peasant's care for his olive trees or their equivalents, what happens to the relation between man and thing?

The peasant lives with his trees. His thoughts flutter around them. He looks out for rain, sun, for clouds, gentle and violent winds. His thoughts do not leave the trees. He refers the clouds to the trees. His care includes joy and worry, hope and fear. Care is never alone, nothing but care. We could not care for the olive tree were it not a moving this, requiring and directed toward something, a being to which good and bad things can happen. Care looks ahead. The care of the divine Phrontis outruns Euphorbus going to battle.

All care cares for something alive. Whenever we care for something dead, our care endows it with some kind of life. Care desires to know. It observes. Yet it is not merely thought. It acts. Man removes a stone, supports a branch, loosens the soil. Care sets purposes and contrives means. Care and work together discover the nature of things and teach men to respect it. To care and work the things open themselves. Man learns his power over the things, and its limits. It is as a finite being that he cares. Infinite power does not know care. Man has little power over his care.

Care, dwelling with the thing, weaves a mutual relation between man and thing. He who cares refers himself to the thing he cares for, the thing to himself. Man 'has' the thing; the thing 'has' man. He seizes the thing as his; the thing seizes him. In this mutual relation between work and care is born a human meaning of property—within every legal order and apart from any legal titles.

This mutual relation between the human being who cares and the thing cared for, be it man, animal, plant, or image of a god, be it an individual or a group, a country or the world, is the wonder of care. As man in his care gives himself to the object of his care, he 'has' the object and through it himself.

Yet Homer's image warns us: man in his care is not an I alone with a thing. It is Panthoös, father of Euphorbus, hus-



band of Phrontis. He may take care of the olive tree for the sake of Euphorbus or of Phrontis or for his own sake. Perhaps his father, caring for him, has planted the olive tree. Thus, in his thoughts Panthoös may refer himself not merely to the olive tree, the olive tree to himself; he may refer both himself and the olive tree to Euphorbus and Phrontis.

Care for the I, the You, and the We interferes with care for things. Our cares intermingle; one care will always be reason, cause, effect, the why of another care. In all such webs the what of care persists as a specific relation between the man who cares and the object of his care.

Phrontis cares for Euphorbus and for Euphorbus' sake for many other things. Her care has accompanied his growth, put bands of silver and gold in his hair. Care for the You antecedes care for the thing; it may be older than even the care of the I for itself. The I and the You are born together; at their birth some god laid care in their common cradle.

Such care joins looking after with worrying; it moves to and fro between the two. At the one end we take meticulous care of something without worrying; at the other end we feel fear for something without taking care of it. Inbetween the two poles care is care.

The misery of care is powerless fear; its joy is its power. Amid impotent cares we forget that even care has its joys.

Delight too mingles with care. Panthoös sees the olive tree of his care adorned with white blossoms, its branches moved by gentle winds. Phrontis binds Euphorbus' locks with bands of silver and gold. Her eyes dwell on his hair—now, in the present. For an instant the worry in her care is silent. Phrontis delights in the object of her care; she cares for the object of her delight. Though our delight is not confined to objects of our care, care enhances our delight. The object cared for becomes 'ours'. Any gardener enjoys his own flowers more than anyone else's. We could say, he refers his flowers to himself but he can do that only because in caring he has transferred to the flowers some little piece of himself.

Care works. Only together with work does care bring about that wonder of a mutual relation between man and thing.



As man in working discovers the thing, a stubborn nature that resists and yields, he discovers himself—his skill, his power and its limitations—in the thing. In care and work man converses with the stubbornness of things; the things converse with man. While the olive tree grows under Panthoös' care, Panthoös grows richer by the story the olive tree tells him, a story about sun and rain, clouds and earth, life and death. Only the man who works really listens to the story of the thing. This is the power of working as working and the source of its joy.

In this silent talk of the stubborn man with the stubborn thing the finished work comes into being in a penumbra of care: a house, a corn field, the image of a god. Not all work, however, is of this sort. Many things tell even the worker only a poor story—and ever the same. Then man discovers, instead of himself and his power, only sweat, boredom, and the compulsion that chains him to the barren, stupid thing.

Some primitive tribes demand that those who claim the right to build a canoe first spend a week pondering with a quiet mind the nature of the tree; a second week concentrating upon the nature of the tools, a third contemplating the image of the canoe. In this way the perfect canoe comes to be. Our ways are different, yet the perfect machine, though not the work of one man, comes to be in not so different a manner.

The work as product, purpose, seems to forget the labor as means. As the image of the product has accompanied the making, so the working will live in the work unless working is nothing but a mere means. The peasant looks at the field he has plowed. Even the modern worker looks with some collective pride at the powerful airplane whose parts are assembled by many hands.

However, as the worker does not discover the thing and in the thing himself in every kind of labor, so not every kind of product preserves the working and the worker. The joy and misery of labor, its greatness and dignity, its pettiness and shame spring together from the interrelation between man and thing, between the thing, the work, and the 'world'. How-



ever this joy and this misery may seem to vary, the reasons for their being joy and misery are the same in all societies.

Work is richness and poverty in man conversing with the things of his world. Yet the greater part of man's care is not care of the worker for the thing on which he works but care for something else, something external to his work. Most labor is means to an end. For the sake of money I compose a miserable poem for the family magazine which would not accept or pay for a good one. I care for my hungry children but not for the quality of the poem.

These remarks aim at the relations that as 'care' bind the man who cares to the object for which he cares. The matters of care are diverse. Their specific character will give a specific character to our care—within certain limits. It is not the character of things as things infinite in kind and number, in a given objective world of all things. It is the role the thing plays in an occurrence we call life.

Man cares for himself, for the things of his needs and delights, for the other human being who is or could or should be a You to him, for the We in which he is, for the sky that encompasses this We. These are the eternal matters of eternal care. They, however, do not divide care into different kinds that can be separated. All concrete care interrelates these matters in variable tissues of their mutual relations—in the mode of both 'having' and 'not having'. The specificalness of this tissue qualifies the particularity of a specific care. Panthoös' care for the olive tree may be care for himself, for Phrontis and Euphorbus, for the We, and perhaps for the favor of a goddess who is the goddess of olive trees.

Panthoös' care for olive trees, pigs, and cows is limited. He may care for the olives, the ham, the milk he consumes or sells; he cares for himself lest he starve tomorrow. This is his first concern. As death looks over the shoulder of want, want silences all other cares. When want turns away, they quickly speak up again.

The modern observer, thinking in terms of rational purposes, should beware lest his matters of course mislead him.



Care for a thing can go beyond the thing as means to an end. Care, discovering and respecting the nature of the thing, may learn and yield to what the thing requires. Even the man of rational purposes sometimes straightens a bent petal of a flower though he does not know why or for what.

Man hungers and thirsts, eats and drinks as an individual, each one for himself. The group has neither tongue nor stomach. But even man in want is not merely an individual. Animals and men starve lest their offspring die. In his delight over the olive tree and its olives Panthoös is not self-sufficient. In most societies people eat and drink together, and not only for practical reasons. When the heroes of the *Iliad* slake their hunger and thirst in company, the poet blends their joy over themselves and one another with their delight over the broiled fat. Since Adam's day Mr. Smith has wanted Mrs. Smith to admire the cauliflower he brings in from the garden. The astonishing refinement of the senses conversing with the colorful things some cultures are capable of is the product of a long history of men responding to men.

Panthoös cares first of all for himself, for he loves and fears death. Even in caring for Euphorbus he may care for himself. His son will support him when he is infirm. His son's glory will be his. Panthoös' care for himself is behavior of Panthoös toward himself. But Panthoös as the subject who cares and Panthoös as the object cared for are not quite the same.<sup>9</sup> Panthoös is the Panthoös of Phrontis and Euphorbus about whose glory and shame the folk in distant countries may tell one another. In caring for himself Panthoös cannot help caring for Euphorbus and Phrontis and his city. He owns himself only in the world of his care. The self he loves is the self in the world who looks at the sun and clouds and clings to the thing, giving and taking. He loves the Panthoös he could be and would like to be.

Man's self-love is a mere name unless it is spelled out in the letters and syllables of a relational structure in which any living I, moving and moved in a world that moves, behaves toward itself and, folded in an I and Me, is always and never entirely what it is. Man, loving himself, loves life. It is he who



lives. In the process we call life everyone is irreplaceable—to himself. As precondition to all caring, man's care for himself accompanies all other care.

Panthoös' next care is for Phrontis or Euphorbus or their equivalents, the You and the nearest We. His concern is two-fold: for Phrontis' welfare and for his relation to her, that is, for the You to the I and the I as the You in himself. In his care for the You Panthoös cannot avoid caring for himself, for both what he is to his *alter* and what his *alter* is to him is part of his own being. The *alter* can be of various kinds; it need not be a divine Phrontis. It must play the role of the You, giving and taking; by virtue of this role it is an object of care.

I investigate the what of care as a specific attitude, not the multiple why. We learn from textbooks on the science of society that Panthoös needs Phrontis to satisfy his sexual urge, to bear his children, to prepare his food, to sew on his buttons. But no sum of such whys can tell us what care is. Moreover, every little whore who understands her job knows better. When the sailor who absolutely must satisfy his sexual urge pleases her even a little, she will take pains to let him imagine, at least for an hour, that he is to her and she to him a kind of You. He will be grateful just for his illusion. He wants so very much to believe her. Otherwise, he would go away an animal, sated and weary. She knows that the talk of sociologists about the satisfaction of the sexual urge, though obvious, is too simple a description of what this poor male really wants. But the testimony of the little slut will hardly impress the authors of these textbooks. Quickly answering the why, they are in the habit of forgetting the what.

Not only his care for Phrontis and Euphorbus is present in Panthoös' care for his olive tree. There is something else, which is all these together and can be greater than they: the 'We', a matter of mutual concern to the human beings in a group. Panthoös, Euphorbus, and Phrontis may even make claims and demands upon one another, recognize or deny them, concerning the olive trees or their equivalents in the name and for the sake of this 'We'. This We, whatever kind of group it may be, encompasses Panthoös; it is the whole of



the great or small world of man in which he is. When Panthoös cares for the city he is concerned not merely with its objective fate, fearing and hoping for it as it moves from the past into the future. His care dwells with the city. He worries whether it will continue to be his and his children's world, in which he will be a He in the mind of others, respected and honored, and he himself one of those others on whose opinion respect and honor depend.

These two kinds of care, the one for the future of the city, the other for the weight of his voice, may even come to be at odds with each other, though Panthoös is very ingenious about concealing any discord from both others and himself.

Of course this We does not live except in the souls of its members. The community is a community only in the concern of its members. The We continues to move. In something that moves and is moved, the I moves, is cared for, and cares for something. The We in Panthoös' soul may no longer be quite the same We as the We is Euphorbus' soul. Panthoös and Euphorbus may even quarrel about this We. In their talking and listening to each other the We remains the same in changing, changes in remaining the same.

This We may be the family, a group of friends, the nation, the church community. It may be the society of gods, animals, and plants that for a hermit Panthoös plays the role of the We better or worse than his relatives or fellow citizens. The We is a whole of a world in which he acts and feels and from whose horizon Panthoös' questions and answers reverberate. This We is fragile: it needs care; so does Panthoös' relation to it. If there is no such We, its absence is part of the reality. It generates forces—Panthoös will revolt against the family or the city that cannot be a We to him. If the We is in danger Panthoös will defend it. If it is too narrow to be his world, he will widen it. If it is too wide, if the horizon recedes to a remoteness he cannot reach, and his conjuring words get lost in a void, he will seek refuge in narrowness and try to set up a We within the We.

Care is infinitely variable. Pervading everything, it thwarts all attempts to get at its rules. We can describe care only in



its historical cloak, with the help of mutable events or social conditions, of life as interpreted in the image of an historical world. Though its particularity is inexhaustible, only the particular that retains the general, only the general that retains the particular can be 'idea'. History replaces the olive trees by cows, the cows by machines, disregards the family for a while, whirls the groups around, disperses the You, multiplies the We's of the I, changes cities into empires, splits empires, alters the gods and their substitutes, and seems to be unique in each of its works. Man never escapes the iron rules. When some Panthoös, somewhere, immersed in contemplating the eternal stars, cares like hell for the olive tree or for Phrontis and does not even know which idiots run his city, his historiographer can hardly help either discovering something that to this Panthoös plays the role of the olive tree, Phrontis, or the city, or reporting the absence of such a thing as part of the human reality.

Our life minces care into many little cares for this or that, changing from day to day. In our distracting haste from one care to another we are sometimes scarcely aware of a great care. Sometimes one care overshadows all the little cares. The specific feeling of time, the manner in which an age inter-relates memory and expectation, the length of remembering and the nature of a final promise, the specific patience and impatience of a culture and society interfere and alter our care. But even the matters of great concern, which dominate this or that phase in the development of a society, change only within the eternal fabric in which man and man, man and thing, thing and world, are what they are with respect to one another.

What are these matters of great concern? The first is material want. Man in want looks at everything under the aspect of his want. Hence, want offers an obvious answer to the why of all care. The dire must of man's basic needs has induced quite a few to infer from their urgency the priority of their satisfaction as goal of life. Whatever man's ends, his primary need is to survive. The precondition of any end becomes the



end itself. This inference is wrong; man desires more than survival.

Want cripples. A hungry man has no strength to revolt. A piece of bread enslaves him. Fear of want, running ahead of want and discovering hope, sways peoples. Individuals and groups differ in the patience of their enduring. Man endures starvation, if starvation entitles him to hope; this hope may go beyond individual life and be for the fate of children or the country, the victory of an idea, the grace of a god or a life hereafter.

Man bows to the order of a world that embraces him as eternal order. He will endure want the more patiently, the more firmly that which denies him the things he needs is tied up or imagined to be tied up with such an order. He bows to God's will, starves, and prays. He submits to the power of men when it is part of such an order, and slaves. He endures a present want when it is thought of as being merely a phase in the dialectical necessity of the historical process and a step toward a final promise. In a world of potential plenty he will hardly endure destitute conditions that are only the consequences of business cycles in a man-made order. The more firmly the powerholders of this earth can fasten their power to a belief in an eternal order, the less they need violence.

There is a thing of all things—the earth on which we walk to and fro, dig for coal and iron, build our huts and barns, sow our fields and let our cattle graze. To this earth we give; from it we receive our force. A part of it is our country, the land of a We. As generations, following one another, till the soil, conquer the wilderness, bring to light the treasures of the earth, the forces of the country and those of men permeate one another and grow into a unity that violence alone can break up. In calling the people by the name of the country, the country by the name of the people, we recognize this unity. The earth subsists and becomes green again. We have it; it has us.

So a piece of the earth, a valley, an island, a continent, which was only a thing, becomes 'our world'. Our mutual care, work, and action, the memories of our pain and joy, our



delight and the tales of our fathers, all our dependencies on single things, our wishes and desires focus on this piece of earth. Our questions and answers, all our responses to one another, revolve around its things. Thereby in the course of centuries an intangible affinity of tribes or peoples and their countries comes to be; man and land seem to reflect each other; the way the sun shines, the fog creeps, the plain stretches, or the mountains rise seems to correspond to the way man thinks, feels, and speaks.

The homeland knits memories, sentiments, and interests into one. Finally it claims power over our ideas. Its boundaries become the boundaries of our world. Our country: that is the world of our things as well as of our men. Its boundaries confine our universe of response, work, and care. It is the center indirectly of all individual care, directly of all common care of the group. It must be watched, cared for, protected. The We must act. The 'state', the instrument of action, is the state of the country. What is England? A country, a people, or a state? It is all three, each in the others. The country makes the gods into gods of the people, of the state. If they are not already such gods they will be interpreted as such as far as their nature permits. Most gods consent—at the expense of a part of their divinity.

Man's love for his country is as old as man. When, however, the gods or their equivalents have faded or are merely our gods, when a people as people makes an ultimate claim and stands for nothing except itself, when finally even the state, being one with the country and the people, is deified, the love of the country becomes a claim, demand, and weapon in the struggle of the 'patriots' for power over the state. Then the country will be narrow, the people stupid, and the state prone to violence. The three, conceived of as one, join a monopoly of interests to a monopoly of the nation as the only idea. Words will then be loud, the heart small, the soul blind.

The average individual of the mass society of the industrial age is busily concerned with a thousand daily cares. His partial concerns are overshadowed by a specific care. He deems him-



self unique, incomparable, far from Panthoös. He is—yet he is still the same man.

The machine has taken the place of the olive tree. The tool has stepped before the thing, broken its obstinacy. Now the thing is raw material. The machine transforms wood into silk. But the tool too is obstinate. It plays the role of the thing. Man, who made the machine, is remade by the machine. He and his society submit to its logic. The machine too needs care. Love and delight can join in even this care. Since the machine is man-made, however, it cannot be holy. Man manipulates electricity, assumes he knows what it is, and disregards the secret it still conceals. Thus he forgets to revere.

The thing becomes merchandise. The quantum of its value takes the place of the colorful quale. There is one thing on which everything depends—money. It can be exchanged for all things and everything can be exchanged for it. Not having any nature is its nature. The abstract quantity, the mere 'means' is means to all purposes and above all other means; it becomes the end of all ends, yet in itself it is nothing. The relation of man to the property he owns is altered. Ownership no longer binds the owner to the specific nature of the thing he owns. His care will no longer mean familiarity with the thing and its inner riches. The story the thing tells about itself shrinks. Instead, the thing tells a story about its place in the maze of means and ends on which its money value depends.

Only small concerns of a busy day refer to this or that man or thing. The wheels of all the means and ends, the organization of all the machines, of production, distribution, consumption of goods, the society as economy, politics as power over society, become the one object of an all-pervasive care. Neither nature, forced to serve the machine, nor the deity, powerless against the laws of nature, are any longer objects of care. The destiny of man is man. Man-made is the compound of political and economic factors and forces that brings about our national and civil wars, violence, serfdom, and hunger. Man may willingly submit to nature or the will of God—he must be forced to submit to the arbitrariness or in-



eptitude of men who let him starve in a world of potential plenty.

As I write this, man's greatest and most general concern is the job he may lose. This care is interpreted as economic care, fear of want, be it of the I, the You, or the nearest We—the old, eternal story. But this interpretation does not tell the whole story. The claim of the right to work gets its force not merely from the fear of want. Full wages for the unemployed might or might not solve the economic problem; it will never solve the mental. The job means more than earning a living. It means all things—man's conversing with other men and things, his participation in the activities of the great organization that is his world; it is the source of the respect he himself or others will pay him. Not only the I, the You in him, but also the He demands that he have a job. Man is what he does—to himself and to others. Without work he would be and think he was nobody and nothing, excluded from the world of men and things. His counterpart in a more 'backward' country still knows how to lie in the sun, to look at the clouds, and to argue and talk on the market place to no end or purpose. He cannot do that. Sun and clouds tell him nothing. His leisure is not leisure but recreation from and for the sake of working. He must be means in the great convolution of means and ends.

The gods have gone. Yet man still reaches out for the idea that could encompass this world, the more longingly the less transparent the confusion of men and things that is his world. Thus he replaces the faded images of gods by an 'ideology'—the product of his misery, not of reason, although it may pretend to be 'scientific'. He submits in voluntary blindness to its crude simplicity. Such an ideology may be the deification of a race, of the nation, of the state, promise of eternal progress or of a perfect society; it may be the construction of a dialectical process. It concerns the organization of society and its economy, a universal meaning of the historical process. The ideology puts a universal meaning, inherited from religion, into a scientific cloak. It has power over man; it becomes an instrument of present or future political power; as



such it is further simplified and minted into stereotypes, symbols, flags, and gestures. Fuzzy-minded, excited masses carry the leader to power. A confused soul in a confused world needs the ideology. Although a most powerful instrument of the powerholder, it is still only the product of an artificial effort of uprooted souls.

When, however, all the shouting has died down and the fires of war and revolution have left smouldering ruins, we find man, the miserable being, in the chains of want, his thinking constrained in a phraseology grown empty, dreaming again of a protected corner in which as an I and a You within a limited We he could care for olive trees or their equivalents and build a little world of his own and hear his questions and responses resound from some kind of sky.

There is still another of man's great cares: God and man's relation to Him. Want alone equals it in power.

The olive tree may not be simply an olive tree. It may be the tree of a goddess and 'holy'. Things as well as words can have meaning. They too can be images and signs. They can even seem to be just that whose images and signs they are—in an identity of thing and sign. Manifold modes of meaning bind thing and thing, man and thing in countless ties, pointing further and further to other things and other men. Some of these meanings are of a peculiar kind. They claim to be 'ultimate' meanings. Of such a kind is the claim of the sacred tree on Panthoös, of the cross on the Christian, of the flag on the soldier. Such things are no longer mere things as things, nor are they simply signs for other things as things. Such things are 'sacred'. Even the busy man of rational means and purposes may still occasionally respect such a thing and when it is menaced, discover, to his astonishment, that he holds it sacred.

Holy things are objects of awe, reverence, and fright. In their presence man keeps silent or uses particular words and signs that are 'holy'. Such things he touches with clean hands.

Panthoös links the olive tree to a power that pervades the world in which he lives. A horizon becomes visible, beyond, behind, above his family, his valley, his city. One can express



this in various ways, none of which is adequate. Different religions interpret religious experience differently. But the variety of reasons for which in different religions an olive tree or its equivalent seems to be holy affects its 'holiness' little. The olive tree remains 'holy'—against everything profane.

There are powers, manifest in sun, moon, stars, clouds, mountains, rivers, to be divined in the inscrutable eyes of animals, recognized in the passions of the human soul. They sway everything that is. They may be said to be souls of the dead, spirits, demons, gods; they may be one, some, or many. They can participate in the order of men and things, be members of our society, guard our herds, huts, and cities, and haunt our dreams.

If we ask for the 'origin' of religion, a first religious experience as cause, we get not one but many answers. These causes may be different in each case. I ask what, not why.

The world is world as a whole that embraces us. But its capacity to embrace us is precarious and limited. 'Our' world is not 'the' world. Beyond everything we call 'our' as it seems to embrace us arches another horizon out of reach. Now the accessible things that constitute 'our' world—family, tribe, valley, town—will seem limited, dependent, finite. The gods, though they may be but the gods of our city, are greater than the city. Whatever has the power to point to such a horizon is holy. Removed from our everyday care, it becomes the object of a particular care lest it lose its holiness. It needs special care since holy things easily lose their holiness.

All gods, like all sacred things of all religions, are strangely ambivalent. They seem to belong to the world in which we are and to live in trees and animals, to dwell in clouds, on the peaks of mountains, in the temples of the city. Yet they remain aloof, inaccessible. It becomes evident that they do not belong to our world. They confine us; we do not confine them. We conjure, sacrifice, pray, honor, and praise; we invent all kinds of means to draw them to us. We tell one another their myths and legends. They become and do not become 'ours'.<sup>10</sup>



All religions are both immanent and transcendent, though in different ways. Man forever tries to transmute their transcendence into immanence, yet is forever compelled to transcend their immanence. As the gods dwell between our world and the world, their position is ambivalent. Hence one society easily takes over alien gods; another may not admit that the gods of other peoples are gods.

Awe is as old as man and his misery; the sacred olive tree is not younger than the olive we eat. From the beginning man wrestles not only with the thing he needs or with men but also with the order of the whole of his men and things. Hence it may be understandable that God and man's relation to Him can become one of those great cares that overshadow all the mutable partial cares. It is not easy to bind gods; gods need particular care—submission, obedience, trembling fear, sacrifice, devotion, honor, praise, hymns, humble requests, gifts, the beautiful work, and the joyful festival. The god cared for, if he so pleases, gives man peace with his soul and his blood.

As is only natural, the religious man is unable to recognize any description of his religious sentiment or experience unless it is in terms of his own religion. The foregoing pages will tell him little. Moreover, they seem to have no place for the concern of the Christian for the salvation of his soul.

The Christian converses with himself with respect to a transcendent god outside the world. He converses with God with respect to his own individual soul. As an individual I, he is a Christian. Thus the Christian religion seems to refute the priority of a scheme in which the I, the thing, the You, the We, and the world are referred to one another in a variable tissue of variable relations. Yet the Christian merely speaks a different language.

The Christian faith founded a new society. What the Christian called world and repudiated was the *mundus hominum* of his own age—his worldly interests, purposes, and desires. This world is not and should not be the world of the Christian. The new society seems to mean the community of the faithful, the community of God's children united in God the



Father. Prior to this society, however, is another society; in it God as the sole He of all beings is the first You of every individual I. This principle remains present in all Christian life. This is the new thing, never heard of before.<sup>11</sup>

The Christian 'lives in God'. In this 'life in God' the relation of the individual as individual to Him as You is the Christian's greatest concern, overshadowing others—care for olive trees and olives, for wife, friend, society, and city. This concern is concern about the destiny of the all-precious, immortal soul, fear of hell, hope for grace.

This world of mutable men and things is no longer the world. It has been created and will end. Above it another world embraces the Christian, the world of God's eternal presence, the order of the blessed and the damned. Of all gods the Christian God is the only one who bends down to man. He is a You and cares; his care embraces man. The faithful is secure in Him.

On the basis of this social idea Christian communities are formed, here and there cutting across the existing groups and their natural ties, detaching the I from its We and linking it directly to God, and only indirectly through God to the new group, the *ek-klesia*, the community of the individuals 'called forth'. As the one He to all men becomes a You to each individual the Christian faith tries to break through the stupidity of all groups that make ultimate claims and impose final obligations.

The universal society of late antiquity, in which Christianity came into being, had uprooted and atomized peoples and races, mixed or blended their gods. In a wider and wider world of insecure, confused, and finally fading horizons, man received the new message.<sup>12</sup> The individual, this petty nothing, became the only thing that mattered, linked immediately to God, indirectly only to other men through God. Supported by Him as his You, the Christian who is still a Christian can as an individual challenge the arbitrariness of the We. The horizon of his world arches over all men beyond my valley and yours and any valley whatsoever. This seemingly asocial idea is the greatest social idea ever conceived.



Even as great an idea as this is bound to the law of finite life no human reality can transgress. Though the Christian is what he is with respect to God, this other-worldly god is concrete by virtue of his role in the life of the finite creature. Whenever the Christian's words disregard the iron chains, his deeds bear witness against them.

The factual life of the Christian differs less from the life of the non-Christian than his interpretation of life from an unchristian interpretation. The contemptuous world, the disparaged senses and their things, the innocence of nature do not yield easily to words. The partisan of the ancient gods sings:

*Opfer fallen hier  
Weder Lamm noch Stier  
Aber Menschenopfer unerhört.<sup>13</sup>*

Man does not imitate the saint who pretends to be ashamed of the greed he felt as an infant for the breast of his mother. Ever again a sin vainly protests its innocence and relearns in vain that it is sinful. Still the colorful world and the innocent delight subsist and, despite all words, let on the day of the Lord one and the same sky confine the little church on the hill, the statue of the saint on the bridge, the wandering clouds, and man's joy in the broiled fat, in the white arms of his beloved, his little pride, and his exuberant heart. Ever and again man contrives to reconcile not only God and his own precious soul but also God and all the colorful things and man in his valley.

He, beyond the world, is a You to every I. As this You may not respond, I seek the other man who will respond in His name. But this other man is only a man, frail and erring as I myself. The God of the individual becomes again the God of a group. The group submits again to its interest, stupidity, and claims in the name of God to be everyone's judge. Nor does the church escape the fate of the state. It too will submit to the inherent logic of an institution that is merely a tool of a limited society. Yet there remains the great and unique thing: that I, an individual, immediate to God and sure of Him, can



rise for the sake of my immortal soul above the stupidity of the group and revolt against its priests—in the name of the One who is greater than any group. Theology, confronted with the discord between God and the innocence of natural life, leads the words of the faithful along winding paths. Deeds, however, follow the words reluctantly.

The holy things of the Christian, though things of a *mundus hominum*, are things of a *mundus dei*. They are holy because this world of ours is not 'the' world. The Christian is tempted again and again to draw the deity into the world of his things and men—and ever again transcends his world to reach the deity that eludes him. The God of the Christian cannot be in the flowers and in the eyes of animals—he cannot be 'immanent'. Hence the Christian lets the flowers and animals be in God, and St. Francis preaches to the birds. Theologians tell us that he was a panentheist, not a pantheist.

Whether Christian or not, man forever demands that the colorful things of his senses testify to the whole in which he is. In the things this whole should become manifest so that, conversing with the things, he converses with God; conversing with God, he converses with the things. But he never embraces the ultimate power that embraces him—his world will never be the world.

By His human greatness the Christian God conquered all other gods. In the misery of his enlightened soul present-day man still pays tribute to His greatness. The Christian God has been more to man than any other god. To lose Him hurts more than the loss of any other god ever did. Peace with this God was peace of man with himself. The Christian God had given and promised to give so much—salvation of an immortal soul, a meaning of the whole that justifies all misery. The godless man of today is a Christian without God, yet with all the hopes, claims, needs of a Christian. He still has a soul that desires to be saved. He still waits for God to return. Analyzing his 'despair', denouncing life as senseless, history as absurd, he thinks and feels as a Christian. He is still a creature of the God he denies.



Gods, trees, machines, economic systems, political institutions are not just data belonging to a 'reality' as a multiplicity of entities dispersed in space and time. They are what they are by virtue of their role and function in a context we call life. In this context the eternal care of 'eternal' man interweaves the I, the You, the We, the thing, and the world, and makes each of these five co-present in the other four in many mutable modes.

In this investigation into care Panthoös is not Panthoös, Phrontis not Phrontis, the olive tree not an olive tree, and the city not a city—things that exist in a definite historical space at a definite time. They merely represent the relata of a relational fabric which interrelates momenta of a fundamental structure of life that is prior to history. Within it, bound by its necessity, all history moves.

The texture of this fabric contains the principles of its variability. Inbetween care and carelessness man moves; mutable care links in mutable ways the I, the You, the We, the thing, and the world. As the relata entail one another and are concrete only together, so the possible variations of their relations accompany one another as possibilities of man.

Every man is what he is in the context of what he can be. As a being that cares, man enjoys the carefree instant. Within the context the lack or deficiency remains a part of the reality. The reality of the context does not depend upon the factual existence of a You or a We that can be a You or a We to me, of a world that can embrace me, of a thing on which I can feed. The absent is present in the mode of deficiency. Lack or need is tension; it engenders movement. The context interrelates possibilities, not actually existing things. Such possibilities are real—in their frame the real is concrete.

This context is not idle harmony. It includes discords and concords, misery and happiness—as possibilities of life, present in one another. But life is not indifferent to its possibilities. As life it is directed, tending not toward mere survival but toward the 'good life', toward the intensity of giving and taking in which the spark jumps from the I as You to the You as I,



and in its light the things shine brightly, and with the things the We, and perhaps even the sky that embraces this We.

By virtue of some knowledge about this fabric and only by virtue of it and within its limits can we understand the life of other societies, ages, cultures, and write history; and even this only if we refrain from absolutizing the cloak of the particular conditions.



## *Chapter 4*

### CAREFREENESS

**M**AN, THOUGH FULL OF CARE, is the most high spirited of all animals. Occasionally he laughs even at himself or at his gods. Were care his entire nature he would never have achieved what he has.

Freedom from care negates care. Yet it is as little of a negation as Epicurus' definition of pleasure—freedom from pain.<sup>14</sup> The negation is in the unity of a context and asserts the absence of care. The context remains.

The relation of the carefree man to time makes manifest the positive side of freedom from care. Freedom from care denies the care that, emerging from a past, worries about a future. Thus it allows the carefree to live in a by no means negative manner in a now of a fully present presence. In the absence of this possibility care is care. Any joy in the colorful phenomena—in seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, breathing—clenches a now. In memory we delight in a past now we remember at a present now; in expectation we now delight in a future now we anticipate. The hope for a life beyond expects an eternal now.

There can be much gratitude, even reverence in man's delight, though in such delight only our senses seem to converse with colorful appearances. We stroke the fur of a cat. The



apple is a fine thing to look at, whether we are hungry or not. The cow as it lies in the meadow breathes and blinks in the sun. Even modern man, though he may take his senses merely as means for his restless ends, sometimes forgets himself and enjoys his senses, conversing with the tones and shades of things, the fresh air and the play of light and shadow. According to an old saying, the soul of man loves the body because without the body it could not use the senses.

Even in his delight the individual is not self-sufficient. He seeks the response of other men. The capacity of delighting in sensuous phenomena distinguishes individuals, peoples, and ages. The astonishing refinement in the commerce of the senses with the world of which some cultures are capable is the product of a long history of man's response to man. Whenever delight grows into happiness, much more is present than merely the I as I and the thing as thing.

Imagine that you are eating your meal in the society of a beloved lady or good friends in France, God's own country. You sit in the shade of a tree by the side of a brook and eat what your hostess proudly calls 'the' duck. She has cooked it with the knowledge of centuries. To enjoy the duck you need your friend; to enjoy your friend, you need the duck; to enjoy the glimmering light and the rivulet you need both and in all this you need perhaps a certain relation to the world and to your god, and a heart capable of gratitude. In the one you have the others.

But why do I put so much stress on the few sun-filled drops which for a moment sparkle in the dark sea of care? The reason is simple. In the theories about the genesis of society, want, fear, interest, violence, contract, law, and duty fight for their share in both what is and what should be or have been. But though, without a sizable piece of each of these, society and culture would never have come to be, even all of them together would hardly have succeeded in promoting a society—and if any, only a dull and dim one—without the help of an always forgotten, yet quite simple pleasure of men in men, in things, and the resonance of a 'world'.

Man's delight is of many kinds. The objects of delight do



not suffice to distinguish its kinds. The same kind may be experienced in different objects. Delight can be with or without desire. But even without desire delight is of many kinds. Languages have many words variously akin in many transitions of meanings. We delight in the beautiful; the sublime shakes down and stirs up; grace and charm touch and melt. In their most intense manifestation both the sublime and the graceful go beyond mere delight. We may be able to say what the sublime is. Something greater than man and transcending human measure manifests itself in rock and sea, tree and cloud. Fear becomes awe. Man, meeting a greater power, be it nature or god, is mute. Charm and grace, however, no one could describe except by images and examples. Graceful things do not need size or power to be great or strong—a small flower, a leaping deer, the perfect movement of animals, a word, some verses, or a dance suffice. The tranquil gentleness of men, living beings and things, whenever some humble perfection seems the manifestation of something that in ourselves we call soul, evokes benevolence. We let it be as it is; it disarms. Even the foe, if able to see it, will spare it. Sometimes even grace is sublime through the sheer power of charm.<sup>15</sup>

The gods of the Greeks become graceful in the songs of their poets. Jesus too in the gospels is graceful. Yet gods and saints, if they are to be graceful, must be human.

Whatever this intangible grace, it is not restricted to one and entirely excluded from another culture. He who looks for it may find it even among savages. Yet the gift of seeing and recognizing it, the objects in which it is seen, the chances of its growing and being seen, change. Thus ages and peoples, even modern nations have more or less of it. Grace is not on good terms with fear, want, violence, noise, or serfdom. It steals away silently, missed only by the few who still know what it is.

The high-spirited mood is carefree. It is a specific attitude of man toward things, other men, and the world. In the moment of such exuberant vitality man disregards the order and law set by men or gods and enjoys mischief and caprice, the sur-



prises he causes, himself as origin and source of movement. The giver of norms and law is a rebel by nature. He should remain one despite all his care. The lawgiver in him needs the rebel. When joined with habit, high spirit is no longer exuberant. Its function is to save man and his societies from habit. It is a privilege of youth; theirs is the excess of vitality, the urge to start action for action's sake. As youth did not set up the social norms, it has some right to defy them. We cannot help enjoying their exuberance though it may be careless and spiteful, since we enjoy life that is full of life. Moreover, we feel that much in the mass of inherited norms is nonsense and have good reason to be grateful to any high mood that challenges it.

To rulers a monopoly on exuberance eventually becomes fatal. Domination is maintained by sacredness of law and care for the ruled.

The I is a You, the You an I, only as potential source of surprise. Not only the You but the We needs some potential surprise in the I. Norms can remain meaningful and get rid of nonsense only if there is someone who might like to break them.

Every society, however, must draw a line beyond which high spirits become an outrage and lawlessness a crime—at its fundamental order, at the law that is meant to be eternal, at the sacred. In compensation, most societies, unwittingly or wisely, grant to man's exuberant mood some area of innocuous disorder, certain objects, days or weeks. Such exuberance, however, easily becomes habitual and withers.

The inner force of a society proves itself in the high spirit it can afford to tolerate. To the moralist exuberance is negative. He speaks in the name of established norms. High spirit ignores this yardstick. It knows itself to be positive and measures the society by the happy mood of a creator who sets and breaks the norms. The periods of a high culture, mostly brief, have been periods of a not altogether respectful high spirit. The Greeks, never tiring of condemning the *hybris* of men trespassing on the boundaries set to mortal men by the immortal gods, show how much they were in need of such



warning. In their insistence there is admiration. When Heraclitus says that the Erinyes, the beadles of the eternal law, would force the sun back to his divine path if he ever left it, we feel that Heraclitus' sun might be tempted to leave it.

When man feels free from the fetters of his purposes, cares, and worries, he lets thing, norm, and law be what in the mood of a full moment he pleases. Then much nonsense comes to be, yet here and there the beginning of some great sense. The joy of living justifies a great deal of nonsense. When the Sabbatarians succeeded in replacing the merrymaking of the old Sunday by the Puritans' fear of hell, all trees and animals wept, pitying man for his silliness.

"Nearly everywhere where there is happiness there is joy in nonsense", says Nietzsche.<sup>16</sup>

Men in all times and cultures like to play. The question, what is play, includes the question of seriousness. Play is 'merely' play.<sup>17</sup>

It does not suffice, however, to divide a multitude of 'objective' actions into two classes, play and seriousness. The two are different attitudes of men. The attitudes are not tied to the classes of objective actions. Man can behave playfully in his seriousness, seriously in his play.

The attitude seems subjective, the action objective. Chess is a game, war is serious. It is the attitude that decides. Whereas chess may become serious, war a game, a playful attitude remains playful, a serious attitude serious. The dividing line is not man-made and arbitrary. The 'merely' in play is an invariant of life—all habits of present thought notwithstanding. I mean of course the merely in the thing itself, not the merely on the tongue of man.

This difficulty is not the only one. Man is a creator of semblance. He can treat a play as if it were serious, a serious matter as if it were play. He can hide a playful attitude behind a serious attitude, a serious one behind a playful one. Some, though not many, societies know how to refine to the utmost such hide and seek and to enjoy the seriousness in what seems to be a game; the play in what seems serious.



Even the individual occasionally plays by himself. He sets himself a task and makes rules. He tests his luck, his ingenuity, his patience, the element of chance in cards and dice. Many things are necessary if such acting is to be playful.

But the play of the individual is not real play. He faces merely the mute obstinacy of balls or cards. Real play needs another I—the answer of his skill, ingenuity, luck, caprice.

Games, each in its own way, mix daring and caution, exuberance and consideration, and measure your mixture by mine, mine by yours. Yet the game remains play: everything is set by man—the rules, the task, beginning and end, the meaning of the playthings. All validity ends at the limits of the play; it is a world for itself that is not a world.

The queen in chess is neither a queen nor a piece of wood or ivory. She is a being of the play, defined by the movements she is permitted to make. Play has its own definite space, its geometry, its laws of motion. It is a little cosmos of its own, separated from the real world of our care for the sake of playing, withdrawn from its causes and effects, means and ends. What occurs in the chess world ends at its boundaries. When games are played for money, glory, honor, for the possession of women, even when life is the stake, the player himself sets the stakes and agrees to tie the result of the play, though not the happenings inside the play, to the world of our care. The game of hazard can have its special seriousness. It may be the sole seriousness of the player. Here only, not in trifles of an empty day, does he meet the reality of fear and hope, daring, risk, passion, and self-control, the smiles and frowns of fortune. Here he lives; hungry for this seriousness he plays. To him, starting and ceasing to play, deciding on the stakes, high or low, is not play.

The play of children is their little seriousness. It becomes play when and as far as it is opposed to a world of care and obligation. Small children play alone and everything becomes a toy. But they merely explore the things and test their little power to make the things be and mean this or that. Thus they build their little worlds of the moment. The little lawgiver enjoys himself as source of norm and meaning.



My main concern, however, is not the play but the playful attitude as a specific relation of man to thing, men, or world. Even games can be played playfully without much respect for the spirit of the game. A writer plays with language. Some praise mingles with our blame. What we praise is the skill of the craftsman, the ease and facility of artifices, tricks, dodges, skirting the edge of what the language allows. The playful attitude ignores any deeper obligation of word or matter. A conductor leads a Beethoven symphony playfully, displaying his skill at the expense of the work itself. In the late periods of an art style we may complain about the playful treatment of the form. Technical skill outlives sentiment and obligation. The statesman, charged with caring about the whole, occasionally remarks angrily that a diplomat or a general merely plays a professional game. He feels that the diplomat looks at the relation and constellation of the powers, the general at his war, as if it were a game, an isolated task, separated, self-sufficient, subject only to its own rules.

Human beings can behave playfully toward one another. The great example is the love between the sexes. Here the hide and seek of play in seriousness, seriousness in play, of semblance and truth in merely or not merely playing can be cultivated by societies and carefully protected by moral and immoral norms of behavior.

He merely plays with her but she takes it seriously. The girl merely flirts. The 'merely' of play protects her; she reserves to herself the right to mean it or not. Perhaps she plays with fire and enjoys it. Or it may be delight in the truth of a moment. Then it seems to be merely play, as it is not intended for eternity though it should be. We deceive ourselves; this 'should be' is but the observer's idea of seriousness.

The boy who merely plays with his girl, the girl who merely flirts, deny to their playing any bearing on their present or future seriousness. They do not deviate from their ways. Like the player, they take on only a limited commitment, the commitment of the play. As far as they merely play they have no purpose beyond the play. The consequences of their words and deeds end at the boundaries of the play.



Such an attitude does not become serious because a society holds that the relations between boys and girls are a serious matter which should not be dealt with playfully. It remains merely playful when a society approves it. The opinion of the society changes the words used, not the thing itself.

The human beings who play this age-old game enjoy both each other and each his own self—the one with respect to the other. They delight in the little surprises of the senses and the soul, in the concealing and divining and making manifest, in the appearances of the moment. For the sake of this delight they allow for a while a mere semblance to behave as if it were truth. They wink and connive at lies—the gods shut their ears to their oaths.

Yet the joy of this play calls for a bit of danger—the danger that the player may be seized by the seriousness of a passion and be captured though he meant to capture. Thus they trifle—playing with love along the edge of its seriousness.

This play deserves some interest on the part of the social scientist. The I plays with another I. As long as the play is merely play, the You and the We are but the semblance of a moment. When the You becomes a You and the We a We, care joins the play, and the play is no longer merely play. In a country with an old tradition, the society grants to such play of human beings a certain range of freedom—for some days or weeks of a carnival. The society behaves playfully. He who takes things seriously or does not know how to play the game—the jealous husband, the stranger, or the worried—is a spoil-sport. One plays a role, wears a mask. One seems to be something one is not. One enjoys seeming, hiding, surprising. Words, even actions, are not commitments. On Ash Wednesday they are no longer real.

Here too an area of play is set apart, a behavior permitted and withdrawn from the context of care and everyday life. Caprice enjoys caprice. In all these examples the 'merely' in the play has fundamentally the same meaning.

Why do human beings play? For exercise, recreation, escape, entertainment, or whatever else of that kind could be listed on a questionnaire? But the questionnaire never gives



more than the habitual rationalization of a definite society at a definite time. Man deceives himself about his motives. Only inquiry into the what can answer the why.

Life enjoys living. In play the I enjoys the I, the You, and the We, the fabric of caprice, exuberance, action, skill, chance, freedom, and norms—in a play world whose creator and lawgiver is man himself, and which does not claim to be the world. Within this world man is master of his care.

There are, however, plays that though plays are not merely plays and not only because loss and gain have consequences in the world of our care for money or honor. I look for the meaning of that 'not merely' in the festiveness of man's festivals.

All festivals are festivals of a society. Every society celebrates festivals. The individual does not. There are festivals of the family, the tribe, the city, the people of a parish, a diocese, of the universal church, for the souls of the dead, for the memory of plight, great deeds and doers, decisive events, for a local hero, the saint of a country, for the god of a town or of the wide world.

Work ceases; all the dispersed small cares should be silent. The festive mood refers the human beings to one another and all together to the festive cause and through it to the whole that encompasses the group as group. To do just this is the festival's function. For the sake of this function the festival requires a festive attitude.

In the festival the personal pronoun manifests the unity in its plurality. Man enjoys his little I as I and as You, as He or She on the tongues and in the eyes of the others, as part of a We, even of several narrower or wider We's, as part of a You, as one of the people from East Dorset who are a You to those from West Dorset, and finally as part of a 'they', the crowd of the others who look on and opine, gossip and judge. The festiveness of festivals entwines all these roles the personal pronoun articulates. Each plays and enjoys all roles. The eyes of all are on everyone. The boys and the girls, the adults and the old, the families, associations, neighborhoods, villages



—all show their best side to one another and want to be aware of one another in their appearance, semblance, or reality.

Thus in the festival the society enjoys itself as unity of a universe, differentiated in the differences it comprises. In enjoying itself the society is aware not only of itself as a society but of the horizon that embraces it. This is the festiveness of festivals. It holds for festivals of all causes and groups. It holds for Christmas within the family, for the Panathenaia in Athens, for Maria's Assumption in the province of Venice. The delight of men in one another is delight in the things of the festival. Men dress themselves and their things up for one another. They decorate trees, display flags, braid wreaths, parade in groups and gaze at one another and their things. The festive area is sacred, separate. Man enters it clean and bedecked. We wash our children's necks before they enter it.

Hallowed things are no longer things as things. A meaning beyond the reality of everyday relates them to a horizon which as an ultimate horizon embraces the festive group. Most festivals are festivals of gods, heroes, or saints. The gods are present; sometimes they come from far away to their festivals. Since man delights in his gods and their images, he assumes that the gods enjoy him, his costumes, flags, and wreaths, and the odor of fat and roasts, and dedicates to them gifts, dances, and hymns.

The festival refers man as an I in a We to the world. Thus it articulates the 'in', the shortest and the weightiest word for the theory of society. It interrelates the exchange of aspects, the reciprocal awareness of perspectives of men and gods, families, generations, professions, and associations in the reference to a sky which encompasses the festive group as a whole.

The festiveness of festivals can grow pale—habit may do its work. But we should not be deceived by the staleness of our festivals. There was a time when the stale was not yet stale. Even habit had to become habit. Though habit may have worn off the sacredness, there is still a bit of it which can be revived as long as there is still some festive mood.

Festivals help societies to keep their gods alive. They refuse



to die. Some outlive their gods. When they do, new priests, conscious of the limits of their power, contrive to transfer something of their original gods to the new gods.

Ages, societies, and cultures differ in their capacity to celebrate their festivals in a festive way. Festivals, each in its own way, conjoin exuberance and consecration. Within the span of time and the area of the festival, its norms rule supreme. They are not the norms of every day. Many things are required that everyday life does not demand. Some things are permitted that everyday forbids. Innocent exuberance is free. In honor of the Declaration of Independence or of the conquest of the Bastille our children may make as much noise and devour as many cakes as they like.

Festivals attract play. The play as sport and competition of individuals or groups becomes the concern of the society enjoying itself. The spectator becomes part of the play. The players play not merely as I and You, We and You, with and against one another, but as he, she, and they in front of and for the others; and the others take a passionate part in the play, on one side or the other, applauding or hissing. Not only for enjoyment's sake; for the sake of consecration too the festival gets a hold on play. Such play, however, is of a different kind; it is not merely play. In such play the playthings, the rules, the actions, refer—by virtue of an inherent meaning—to the ultimate horizon of a society. In taking part in and looking at such play, the society becomes aware of this horizon. Since such play too is set apart from everyday life and its cares and purposes, we call it play. But in being set apart it aims at a seriousness that is more serious than everyday seriousness. The sacred play though a play is the more serious seriousness.

In the shadow of the temples art comes into being. The girls or boys dance around the holy tree; the warriors sit around the sacred fire, sing and lament and rejoice in rhythm. A man skillful in carving carves the image of the goddess; the women weave the holy dress, the poets compose the sacred song to be offered to the god. In so doing man links his grief and joy,



the gentle and the wild, the soft and the hard to the gods and the norms behind the gods and, in the sensuous forms he creates, becomes aware of the order of his troubled soul.

The mystery of art cannot be part of this inquiry.<sup>18</sup> If it could, its place would be at the end, not here. An unanswered question accompanies this inquiry. So much, however, may be said: the question is not answered by asking for the why of art and enumerating as possible answers, relaxation, entertainment, escape, conquest of fear and pity, sensuous delight, service of the gods. There are hundreds of such causes and evidence for each. None is an answer. We should ask 'what?', not 'why?', and put the question not to any of the various things that to one or the other society seem still to deserve subsumption under a class of things called works of art, but to the greatest in art. The greatest works manifestly have the power to outlive the society, the age, the culture of their origin. They outlive the gods, yet retain their sanctity; they elicit from even the irreligious a kind of awe that is often the only kind of piety of which the citizen of an age without gods is capable. How can they? This is the question that makes all our easy answers totter to their fall.

Still another freedom from care demands a place. Man laughs. From the mean laughter over the fat man chasing his hat down the street to a humor we call divine the way is long.

After grace humor is the most inaccessible of all things human. Akin to exuberant high spirits, *Uebermut*, from which it seems to spring, it accompanies play and festivals; even art uses its services; no society can do without it. It does not spare even the gods when they are no longer strictly sacred. It stops only at the sacredly sacred and at man's ultimate misery, anguish, and death; and even then only when facing the sublime or the horrible.

Humor can be of many kinds—cruel and kind, grim and friendly, gross and fine, spiteful and gentle, shallow and profound. It can deny man's entire seriousness. It can destroy one seriousness and replace it by another. It can make manifest this other or let us merely surmise it. Yet a unity in the phe-



nomenon deserves the unity of a name. As a distinct attitude, humor demands a place within man's possibilities. Knowledge of its place would lead to the rules of differentiation inherent in the nature of humor.

Man is ridiculous; animals and plants are not. Animals are ridiculous only by analogy. They can show man how ridiculous he is.

The ridiculous seems to have to do with some disproportion, incongruity, discord. Life is full of incongruities but few are ridiculous. No attempt to find a formula for the specificness of the ridiculous incongruity has ever succeeded.

The fat man sitting in a small chair, the knight in his night-shirt searching for his sword, the solemn dignity of the man and the infirmities of his clumsy body, the archbishop in slippers—discrepancies between the great or small cause and the small or great effect, between intention and act, between voice and gesture, between speech and situation, between man's manner and his clothes, between claim and reality, character and condition—innumerable things of that kind can, but need not, be ridiculous. Under certain circumstances, seen in a specific aspect, they become ridiculous. Humor is at odds with care. Care is oblivious to the ridiculous.

Absorbed by cares, passions, interests, and entangled in ridiculous incongruities we have difficulty in seeing the ridiculous side and get angry when others see it and laugh at us. To laugh at ourselves we must be able to step back, at least for a moment, from our passions and worries. Ability to do that is part of man's inner freedom.

Instead of searching for a definition of the ridiculous, I inquire into an attitude toward things, man, or world in which man laughs at the ridiculousness of man. About this attitude the highest manifestation can teach us more than the many ambiguous cases on the edge of what men may call humor.<sup>19</sup>

Incongruity presupposes an order relative to which the incongruous is incongruous. Nightshirt and sword, dignity and slippers are incongruous. The fat man does not fit the small chair. In life man, the miserable and awkward being, is tripped ever and again in such discrepancies. A dignitary should be



dignified even in slippers. A man solemnly uses words he does not know how to pronounce. Finding such discrepancies ridiculous, we assume that man's things and acts should fit one another; that the fat man should sit in a large chair and that men's ambitions should correspond with their stature. The ridiculous kills, if only for a moment, anger, indignation, and pity.

Our laughter may be harmless, even well meaning, as man's own nature brings it about that the things of the children of men often do not suit one another; thus all the ways and doings of man are pervaded by the ridiculous. Violation of an external order of things may reveal a hidden order in which their incongruity is human—hence our benevolence.

Thus the kind of humor, its shallowness or depth, its grimness or benevolence, seem to depend upon the kind of order the laughing man accepts in finding a discrepancy ridiculous and on his attitude to that order.

Men sometimes disagree whether a discrepancy is ridiculous or not. Our point of view in laughing may itself be highly ridiculous when seen from the viewpoint of another kind of order.

The order may be only the order of everyday things—the order by which a coat is too tight, sleeves are too long, a hat is too big. It may be merely the order of a social group, its manners and habits; the man who violates that order becomes ridiculous in the eyes of the members of his class. It may be a less or more shallow view of man's existence in which all kinds of matters of course, customs, habits, norms of a society, can become ridiculous. Humor, in its exuberance and ingenuity of invention and phantasy, can wander back and forth through all these various orders, can interlace the orders and their notions of the ridiculous. It can alter the points of view and make suspect all the ways of man. This is its sovereignty. Doing this it fulfills a social function. Society, which as a universe of mutual response, care, and work, sets up norms, builds an image of all the world, and in it interprets man and his existence, ever again goes astray and has the best reasons for being grateful to humor which shows up as ridiculous



this or that man-made rule or this or that seriousness of its rulers. Thus society, as long as it is still a universe of response, willingly yields to humor the entire wide area between misery and want and the holy that is still holy.

Since the points of view and kinds of order we accept in finding incongruities ridiculous are not of equal rank the ridiculous itself is not of equal rank. The silliest clown can make the wisest man laugh merely by reversing the order of customary things. His pants are far too baggy; his pockets too wide; the things he carries in them do not belong in pockets. His top hat is not a chair—sitting down on it he falls, but his fall is merely a way of getting up. Here he stands in front of his demolished hat. But the hat is no ordinary hat; he whistles and the hat rights itself. We are kind enough to laugh—if and only if everything proceeds rapidly from one surprise to the next and the silly face and the silly things agree or disagree in the right way.

Before going down, the upper class of a society defends in a last effort its rules of behavior by the notion of *ridicule*. Under no circumstances should one make oneself ridiculous. Falling off a horse, reading a serious book, yielding to passion, wearing brown shoes with a tuxedo, carrying an umbrella with an evening dress, make one ridiculous in some societies. However, by such laughter the society itself becomes the target of its successor or of a humorist who takes pleasure in unmasking the deeper discrepancy between the claims and the human reality of that society. Two kinds of ridiculousness compete—they need not be of equal rank. The one humor can be silly, the other wise, according to the human right and rank of the order on the basis of which we laugh.

When we laugh at deviations from a social order, we accept this order as a matter of course. Such an order, however, must have grown as a traditional order, an ingrained way of thinking, though its rules may be merely a multitude of inherited fragments of order. It cannot be made. When the modern despotic ruler imposes rules of correct behavior and thinking on society, deviations from this imposed order are not ridiculous even to the passionate partisans of this order. Official



jokes fall flat. Laughter goes underground, jokes are whispered. Another order, traditional or natural, continues to live, however faintly, in the soul of man. Totalitarian despotism is by nature without humor. It must take itself seriously and cannot help becoming the target of laughter of everybody still able to laugh.

A wealthy American brings his yacht to the *Kieler Woche*—the fashionable event of Imperial Germany. He is a very important person, a man to be honored. The only undecorated man in a society of dignitaries from great, small, and smallest states, all decked out with insignia, ribbons, and stars, he feels uneasy in his simple tails. At the next dinner he turns up with a broad ribbon and a shining star. The Emperor says: "That is beautiful; what is it?" "My own invention, Your Majesty", he replies. Everyone repeats the story and laughs. Few are conscious that this American demonstrates not his own ridiculousness but that of those who cannot yet see the incongruity between their and their princes' emptiness and the right to give and wear such shining adornments. In a few years it became apparent that the joke was not on the American.

A prince at a reception discovers in one of his subjects of lower birth a startling resemblance to himself. He asks: "Did your mother come to Court?" The commoner answers: "No, Sire, my father did."

We laugh when we read in Voltaire that God formed man in his own image but man returned the compliment. In putting an exchange of courtesies on equal footing his *mot* uncovers the double ridiculousness of man forming an image of God in human shape and imagining himself to be formed in the image of God. Though humor denies that the customary order is a matter of course, it need not make explicit the order on the basis of which it denies the customary order. It leaves us to guess, content with our laughter. In one of Gogol's novels an official blames his inferior for having demanded a bribe beyond his rank. In the Russia of his time the hierarchy of rank was sacrosanct even in corruption.

All these jokes are witty by virtue of the sudden surprise of a brief word which shows man in the snares of an order of



things, assumptions, ideas he takes for granted, though they are of his own making. The incongruities are obvious. They are relative not only to another man-made order but also to a seemingly natural order in which corruption respects no dignity of rank: resemblance can be inherited from either father or mother; God and man do not exchange courtesies.

None of these stories is only malicious. Each touches on humor and this humor contains an element of benevolence—if not toward the particular target of the joke, then toward man, the eager giver of laws, norms, and rules, who falls into his own traps. They are not 'social satire' nor are they 'irony'.

Our usage of the term satire is loose. In social satire proper one society or group or stratum derides another, its habits, customs, manners, their incongruities or inconsistencies, describing, inventing, isolating, exaggerating ridiculous types of person, habits, events, allegedly representative of the society. If social satire is nothing more, it will be grim and malicious; it may be amusing but is without humor and mostly shallow. The satirist derides a particular society from the viewpoint of another, real or imaginary, to which he himself belongs in reality or in his phantasy. The derided incongruities are incongruous only relative to another man-made order which the satirist takes for granted and does not question. The derided traits remain accidental oddities, desultory vagaries—vices of a particular society. Social satire can and will be humorous only if and as far as the derided traits are understood in, and traced back to, their human origin, as a natural outgrowth of man's potential nature and the temptations of conditions. If this is the case, the target of the satire is not merely the particular society but in and behind it man himself, the maker and remaker of queer norms, customs, and habits. This kind of satire will touch on humor; some benevolence toward the human animal will mingle with the malicious picture of the specially derided conduct. Molière is not merely social satire, nor is Aristophanes. Horace and Juvenal are only satire, and without humor. Petronius aims at and reaches more than Trimalchio and his type.

The comic poet creates the comic 'type' for the sake of



the comic—the braggard, the miser, the lover, the bawd, the whore, the professor, the bureaucrat, or the politician—man as product of his profession. Each of these types corresponds to some part of the social reality and is ridiculous in its mannerisms. Yet the comic poet, by doing so, sets limits to his own art. He makes us laugh, but the type as type does not yield humor. No concrete man, seen in his totality, is merely a type. Not even the most soldierly soldier is nothing but a soldier; no mother-in-law only a mother-in-law. Yet, whenever the comic poet reaches beyond the type for the individual in his totality, he oversteps the boundary of a mere comedy that aims at nothing but laughter. The concrete individual is never only ridiculous.

Irony too can, but need not, touch on humor. In irony we pretend to take seriously an attitude or opinion we do not approve of. It postpones laughter and proceeds as if an incongruity were not incongruous and no laughing matter. However, an incongruity between the words used and their meaning and intention, understood as irony, uncovers the ridiculous incongruity the speaker pretends to accept. Irony runs the risk of being misunderstood. Some irony in nearly three-thousand-year-old books may still be undiscovered.

Irony as a subtle use of language seems to presuppose a fully developed art of social intercourse, but perhaps only because great masters of irony guide our conception of its nature.

The invention of ironical speech may go back beyond historical memory. Each intentional understatement contains an element of irony. We may even admit that Adam and Eve or their equivalents—in a first detachment from fear, want, care, and dirt, and after the slow birth of language—were bound in their quarrels with each other and with their children to hit upon the first irony, which was already and not yet irony. Probably Eve, the weaker and the subtler of the two, was the first to use ambiguous speech, perhaps after millennia of silence and straightforward lying. Whatever the origin and history of ironical speech, it has outgrown its domestic use and no civilized society will ever renounce Eve's discovery



and its manifold triumphs over the small and big powerholders of families, tribes, churches, and empires.

The particular form varies from age to age, from culture to culture. It may play a greater or smaller role in the life of a society, or no visible role at all. There may be a larger or smaller area of sacred things, institutions, assumptions no form of ambiguous speech is allowed or dares to touch. The use of irony is older than any reflection on or any conscious awareness of it, let alone the joy in its artful use. Its crude or subtle use, its wider or narrower range, the joy in its refinement, differ in many ways and help to describe the particularity of social life in a given society at a given time.

The irony of the Socratic question, though historically the origin of the term, interknits specific incongruities. As a particular form of irony, it is the device of a philosophical genius in an apparently unique intellectual situation in which the knower of his ignorance requests enlightenment from the pretended knowledge of an ignorance unknown to itself. Yet the situation is not unique—it accompanies man throughout his history, though he is seldom aware of it. For this reason Socrates became an eternal figure; when he is forgotten, another Socrates will arise, on a distant star in a remote future, and rediscover the Socratic irony.

Plato, the master of all, not only of the Socratic irony, varies and multiplies and entwines the incongruities of the Socratic irony—for ends of his ultimate seriousness.

Though we smile at the successful irony, we do not laugh at it. It aims at a seriousness behind all laughter.

Irony is not humor. As humor uses all other means—nonsense, the clownish, the grotesque, the farcical, and every sort of wit—so it uses all forms of irony—understatement, pretended dryness—as means to humor's ends. If and only if humor transcends all these forms is it called divine.

I give three examples which have little in common.

Aristophanes<sup>20</sup> is first of all a very great poet. An epitaph, ascribed to Plato, runs: "The Graces, seeking an imperishable sanctuary, found the soul of Aristophanes."<sup>21</sup> We are concerned with his comedies as a manifestation of an attitude—



in his case not only of the poet but of a society able to laugh at itself.

The Athenian democracy was fighting a war in which the city lost its empire and the society spent all its force. The comedies were performed at the great festivals in honor of Dionysus, who, besides other things, is the god of ecstatic exuberance. The public was the entire society except the women and children; the small bourgeois were in overwhelming majority. The demos, 'many', was the supreme power of the state, in fact as well as in theory. Aristophanes was not a partisan of this demos; he was opposed to most of its policy in peace and war.

He is grim, malicious, pitiless, toward his particular targets—the politicians, demagogues, informers, busybodies; he is drastic, reckless in his criticism, full of broad fun. He calls the people he derides by name<sup>22</sup> and all these people, the greater and the minor figures, are in the audience. The comic hero of all his comedies is the Athenian small bourgeois under different names and all kinds of masks in which the realism of daily life blends with the most extravagant phantasy. It is the Athenian bourgeois who rides on a giant dungbeetle to the seats of the gods to rescue the Goddess of Peace or who advises the birds to found a city in the clouds and challenge the gods by intercepting the steam of the sacrifices rising to Olympus. In his *Knights*, brought out at the peak of Cleon's power, the Athenian people, a senile, weak, indulgent man called Demos, dominated by a barbarian tanner—Cleon's business—is courted by a still more blustering sausagemaker who, by his very rudeness, succeeds in outflattering Cleon and at the end restores the old Demos in a magic sausage machine to his former youth and vigor. In the *Frogs* Dionysus himself, the god of tragic and comic poetry, descends to the underworld in search of a tragic poet of greater stature, but Dionysus himself is again the small bourgeois of Athens with all his habits, likes, and dislikes. Whether the phantastic and the realistic elements permeate, are contrasted to, or turn into one another, their mixtures, contrasts, or changes alike are full of political symbols which point to the present situation,



the worries and vices of the city, its rulers, and its people. There is hardly any device of wit, fun, foolery, or drollery the poet does not use. Without bashfulness of any kind, exuberant vitality and the spirit of the festival are given free play.

Yet in all the malice and grimness of his humor the poet is full of benevolence and free from any bitterness: he seems to love the small bourgeois he derides, even to admire his eager, resourceful, ingenious activity, alertness, his bold planning and scheming, the origin of the greatness and the cause of the downfall of the Athenian democracy. Never has any people been capable of such an attitude or produced such a poet or borne with and enjoyed being ridiculed in such a way during a war in which the survival of the city is at stake.

Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is utterly ridiculous. The ridiculous incongruities are many and diverse—between his phantasy and the reality, his ideal and his bodily shape, his speech and appearance, between the role of his lady, his horse, his servant and their actual nature. Hardly any pity creeps into our laughter when the sane minds of a normal order play jokes, half benevolent, half cruel, on him.

The book starts as a satire on a certain literature, the romantic novel of the medieval knight, his adventures of chivalry and his wondrous deeds of noble courage. This may have been Cervantes' original intention. Yet as the spirit of poetry conquers the satirist, the book grows and grows far beyond a satire on a genus of literature or on anything else and becomes one of the most humorous and saddest books about man. From a mad victim of his reading matter *Don Quixote* grows into an individual, a particular man in his totality. He is no longer only mad; the sane order of the natural and social world is no longer only sane; the daily seriousness of ordinary life is no longer a matter of course and entirely serious or the only seriousness; some seriousness pervades the ridiculousness of the hero; some ridiculousness the seriousness of the sane world to which he seems only mad. Shifting aspects and different perspectives permeate one another in changing contexts.

*Don Quixote* is exceedingly brave and enduring; more so



than he himself knows. His chivalry of the erring knight is genuine as attitude, though directed to foolish objects. The guiding image of knighthood in his soul is by no means merely ridiculous—he is noble, kind, lofty, a great man, honest in intention and action. Quite a few of the others, though normal, shrink when measured by his measure. He would not be ridiculous, were it not for the discrepancy between his imaginary world and the real world in which he moves. First of all, Sancho Panza, his knave on his donkey, though sane and standing with real feet in a very real world, is ridiculous in his own way and thus prevents the normal from representing the serious. Sanely realistic and recognizing windmills as windmills, gluttonous, shrewd, not at all brave and not pretending to be, he certainly represents the normal. Seen against his normality, Don Quixote is an utter fool. But Sancho Panza too, though sane, is ridiculous. He is even a fool in his own sane way and becomes more and more of a Don Quixote in clinging with greater tenacity than the mad knight himself to his own dreams. After all, every human being, sane or not, rides on an equivalent of a Rosinante and dreams of laying the head of some kind of giant he has slain in the lap of a Dulcinea of Toboso.

Every man is in some respect a knight of the woeful countenance, though not in Don Quixote's great manner. Seen through the eyes of the other—loving eyes—both knight and knave are ridiculous, though for different reasons, and the poet takes care that they describe each other directly and indirectly in their attitude toward and in their talks with each other. Thus through each other they become real and concrete human beings, individuals, not types—both lovable and both fools.

The ridiculous permeates not only Sancho Panza's realism of natural needs, desires, and cowardice, his way of thinking, and the folk wisdom of the countless proverbs he confuses. It tinges with a color of doubt even the matter of course realities of other human beings as well as of the society, its mores and manners, its order and disorder, the small private idyll, and the grand air of its great life.



The poet plays an artful game with truth and semblance in which the really serious hides behind the seemingly ridiculous, the really ridiculous behind the seemingly serious, in an ever new change of roles and eventually makes us look at the busy doings of man from a distance in which man's ridiculousness becomes serious and his seriousness a little ridiculous. Yet he reaches far beyond any social satire; the order, relative to which the serious is serious and the ridiculous ridiculous, is not any man-made order and never the matter of course of the society of his country and age. He reaches not only beyond his own but beyond any particular society. Only when humor does that are we tempted to call it divine.

Yet it is not only the distance from the attachment with which the poet looks at all things human, it is the benevolence in his eyes for both the serious in the ridiculous and the ridiculous in the serious. This 'saddest book' of all literature is sad only for those who, imprisoned in a man-made deadly seriousness of their own, are incapable of such benevolence and of such distance and unaware of the sun, the bright, warm light, shining over the entire novel, reaching the smallest corner, and the poet's delight in the colorful variety of men, animals, and things in this foolish world.

Theatre audiences laugh at Sir John Falstaff, yet laughing they become fond of him; the soft-hearted public of our time even weeps with him a little when rejection by his "beloved Hal" deflates all his hopes.

From the beginning he is an individual, a whole man, as concretely alive as anyone, and unique, not a type. We laugh at a great many incongruities—between his bragging and cowardice, his grandiosity and shabbiness, his vitality and mass, his greediness and potency, his belly and his purse. But we laugh at more. Falstaff is not only a figure in a comedy; he is a comic poet—inventor and creator of comedies, his own included.

*The brain of this foolish-compounded clay, man is not able to invent anything that tends to laughter more than I invent*



*or is invented on me: I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men.*<sup>23</sup>

He has a right to boast of his wit. We laugh at both what he says and is.

He is even more than a comic poet: he is full of self-irony. "I have more flesh than other men and therefore more frailty."<sup>24</sup> His self-irony, even more than his wit, is his superiority. He knows it and takes care to display it before the prince. It is the only hold he can ever have over Harry's nobler soul.

So much wit imprisoned in such a mass of fat! So much geniality of exuberant life slave to this belly and its greed! Yet this discrepancy between the genius and the fat, though comic and insisted upon by Falstaff as his own comic poet, is not merely comic—albeit it is far from being tragic in any sense.

Falstaff philosophizes and the hearer philosophizes with him. Do not geniality and exuberance justify cupidity and consumption? Are he and his kind not a world of their own, to be measured by their own yardsticks? Falstaff and his way confront Percy Hotspur and his honor. What is this honor? Chasing honor, Percy philosophizes about it when dying. Now he is only "dust and food for"—"for worms"—Prince Harry completes Hotspur's last sentence. "Fare thee well, great heart!" Percy could not answer Falstaff's monologue about his honor except by an outburst of rage and contempt. Prince Harry could but he has a wider soul than either Percy or Falstaff.

As Falstaff, in the broad range of his inexhaustible wit at the expense of everything including himself, is not only ridiculous—the human cosmos can be looked at even with Falstaff's eyes—Percy Hotspur, passionate slave of soldierly honor and the political victim of his impetuous stupidity, is not only serious. The ridiculous Falstaff is superior in knowledge, the serious Hotspur inferior in his blindness. Finally the King himself, his careful planning and efficient political scheming, is not even tragic, let alone the poet's ultimate seriousness.



He too can be seen through the eyes of the genius of pleasure, lust, and wit. Only Prince Harry is superior by the greatness of a humanity broader than Falstaff, Percy, or his father. Neither *Henry IV* as play nor its human cosmos splits into two halves, one comic, the other tragic. It is one and the same cosmos, seen through different aspects by Falstaff, Hotspur, and the King, each too narrow, yet each capturing a human reality. As the Prince comprehends its totality, he alone is able to acknowledge the partial right of the partial aspect.

The aspects change. Percy's honor will feed worms. Henry IV, so efficient and careful, so anxiously guarding the dignity of the usurped throne, dies in uneasiness. Falstaff will live to end as a retired pensioner—the least suitable life for so much belly and wit. Yet he too will die as his own victim, a poor shadow of his former self. While the Prince rises from the battle of Shrewsbury to the throne, Falstaff's greed gets the better of his wit. His self-irony fails him. He gathers around himself a miserable cosmos of human beings, whose expectations of his future role he can exploit. He is still their master by the sheer weight of his superior nature. The abandoned man, he was never more than a thief, robber, cheat, and braggart who deserves not even his pension; the young king becomes truly king by Falstaff's fall.

The poet seems to break all the rules. The comic hero of the tragedy, the tragic hero of the comedy, in *Henry IV* is Man, the ingenious being who, entangled in the many nets of his own making—ambition, glory, honor, greed, and power—can weep and laugh at himself as his own tragic and comic poet.

In Plato's *Symposium* the comic poet is called upon to praise the power of Eros, the god of love. Aristophanes narrates a myth. This myth is ridiculous. Its comic 'hero' is man. Primeval man was round, had four feet and four hands, one head with two faces, looking in opposite directions, set on a round neck and precisely alike. When he wanted to run fast he rolled over and over like a tumbler, turning on his four hands and feet. His might and strength was terrible, the thoughts of his heart were great. He threatened to attack



the gods. Instead of annihilating the race with thunderbolts which would end the sacrifices and worship men offered, Zeus cut each man in two thereby making them more profitable to the gods. "After the division the two parts of man, each desiring his other half, came together, and, throwing their arms about one another, entwined in mutual embraces, longing to grow into one." As they did not like to do anything apart, they were on the point of dying from hunger and self-neglect. Zeus, in pity, invented a new plan: "he turned the parts of generation round to the front so that they could sow the seed no longer as hitherto like grasshoppers into the ground, but in one another."

Man has forgotten the story of his origin. He is deadly serious in all his ridiculous holding of hands, kissing, hugging, love-making, and does not even know what he longs for—to find his lost half and recover his former perfection. Hence the comedy of man's love has its origin in the tragedy of his history.

This myth, though ridiculous, is serious. The speech of the comic poet contains more 'truth' than all the speeches in praise of Eros made before Socrates' speech, much more than the "most beautiful" speech of Agathon, the tragic poet, from which both the tragedy and comedy of human life are absent. Socrates, however, repudiates Aristophanes' truth: the lost half? That is not what imperfect man craves. It is something else—it takes a very great philosophy to say what it is.

After the banquet, when too much wine or the dawn has removed or silenced nearly all the guests, Socrates compelled Aristophanes and Agathon to acknowledge that one and the same poet should be able to compose comedies and tragedies. There was, unfortunately, no one left to report his arguments.

In the greatness of his might and passion the hero of Greek tragedy oversteps the boundaries of mortal man and is wrecked—of necessity. There are two kinds of order—the eternal, 'nature', given by the gods, and the mutable, the work of men. The two kinds of order agree and disagree with each other. Their discord is hidden concordance—eternal necessity. Guiltless and guilty, the tragic hero manifests this necessity.



The comedy has no hero. Its concerns are the awkward norms, wishes, errors, blind spots, dignities, and claims of ordinary life. Everyday man is not a hero. His many incongruities are only ridiculous. Yet the incongruities and their ridiculousness spring from the same eternal order as the discord that wrecks the tragic hero.

These brief remarks about a few examples of the kind of humor we call sublime or divine are intended to describe an attitude—man's greatest victory over himself.

Society, as long as it has some interest in the liveliness of life, needs humor. Man must be exposed to laughter. The nonsense in which he would indulge, were he not laughed at, would have no limits. It has none whenever power protects a powerholder against laughter. The obstinate individual needs the laughter of society; society needs the laughter of individuals. Society sets up norms and all kinds of sense; full of nonsense is this sense.

On the lowest level of its social functions humor protects the norms of average habits against individual deviations—usually a silly humor which is hardly humor.

On the middle level the ridiculous is not this or that deviation from an order that is accepted as a matter of course but the order itself, its sproutings, excrescences, consequences. This middle level is not one, but many, in countless and ambiguous transitions.

Only on the highest level of the social role of humor is the ridiculous no longer this or that man-made rule or norm, but man himself, the glamorous, ingenious, pretentious, clumsy, touching animal. Hence the humor of which a society, an age, a culture is capable, the wit and fool's truth a political power structure can allow and bear, measures the inner freedom of a society.



## *Chapter 5*

# LOVE AND HATE

**W**E USUALLY think of sympathy and antipathy, love and hate as irreducible sentiments, primary data, elements of life everyone knows. When an explanation is demanded, we refer the questioner to biology or physiology. In the mirror of their concepts, however, they are no longer love and hate, just as blue, when we explain it by lengths and frequencies of waves, is no longer blue.

At first glance love and hate seem to be relations of a definite and definable kind between human beings. In all changes of societies and their love and hate a definite relational structure obviously persists as the nucleus of the meaning of the words, enabling us to recognize the love and hate of bygone Chinese as love and hate.

The reality of love and hate eludes words. I would be content if I could make clear that there is such a relational structure which contains in itself the starting points of their countless variations.

I begin with indifference. If the explorer of man were to make his observations in the modern metropolis, he would be astonished at the enormous quantity of indifference that moves there, to and fro. To everyone nearly all others are indifferent. The absence of human relations seems the most human of all relations.



But the others on the street are indifferent only to the man who lives together with a kind of You in a kind of We. To the lonely man the big city means a multitude of potential sympathies and antipathies, though he may be indifferent to all.

Within the small group, indifference is relative, measured by stronger or weaker sympathies and antipathies. The people who meet in a railroad station are indifferent to one another. In a bus or a train where complete strangers are gathered for a while, an invisible spider soon spins invisible gossamer threads. The absolute indifference soon becomes relative.

Indifference is ambiguous. We may mean a relatively weak sympathy or antipathy or an undecided relation, potential sympathy or antipathy. We may mean a mixture of the two, in balance. In the latter case we should not speak of indifference. In the arithmetic of the human heart  $+1 - 1$  does not equal zero, nor does it equal  $+5 - 5$ . Sympathy and antipathy mix but do not cancel each other.

A first sympathy or antipathy springs up before a word is spoken. It is hardly more than an expectation and is often killed by a first question or a first answer. Unable to give a reason, we say simply, "I like or dislike this man." The reasons we offer need not be the real reasons. We may even have some difficulty in saying what pleases or displeases us in another human being. It seems as if it were his or her looks, movements, ways of behaving or speaking, a kind of atmosphere around him or her. It is not just common interests or opinions. Sympathy can grow despite conflicting opinions, antipathy despite like interests, though a great many sympathies and antipathies seem to stem from common interests or similar opinions. Often it is a little and quite irrelevant thing that causes attraction or aversion. The source of sympathy is not similarity. Dissimilarity too can generate and feed sympathy. Thus we must modestly assign to each I a certain obstinate nature of its own and concede to this nature a certain role among the many reasons for sympathy or antipathy.

Modern man may believe he lives in a much differentiated and sensitive society and imagine that in a so-called primitive



society, in which the individual is closely fettered to the group, everyone within the group is linked to everyone else in equal sympathy. That, however, is hardly ever the case. The impression is gained by comparing the behavior of the members of one group toward one another with their behavior toward members of other groups. Any peasant who observes his animals knows that there are degrees of sympathy and antipathy between his horses, cows, and pigs.

Whereas sympathy causes one man to seek another out, antipathy causes human beings to avoid one another, if possible. They do not crack one another's skulls from mere antipathy. In any society, primitive or civilized, despite all the degrees of sensitivity, human beings like or dislike one another. No society, however it standardizes the individual, has ever succeeded in eliminating this inequality. Man should be grateful for it.

Sympathy, a feeling still asleep, awakens. 'Friendship' comes to be. The weight and inflections of the term vary. Nowadays we have sympathetic acquaintances in many towns and call them friends, though we remember them only once a year and by chance. In some ages the word 'friendship' was less pale and denoted a great and precious thing. This great thing is a human possibility of any age; it is even a more or less rare reality, though more or less talked about, praised, and a matter of conscious attention. When sympathy as mere liking looks forward to a possible friendship, it is a pleasant hope to which we gladly cling. It needs little encouragement, likes to overlook and is ingenious about excusing any small things that might weaken it.

Antipathy, however, is unjust; it does not welcome even friendly gestures or reasons for gratitude. We avoid responding and expect that his or her ways will be out of tune with ours. We are polite yet merely move the air. Human beings are good guessers; despite all politeness, they easily perceive slight sympathies and antipathies even in big cities where everybody meets scores of people once a year, smiles, and



always carries with him a bunch of half-conscious sympathies and antipathies that may never become friendship or enmity.

I put aside the many half and quarter friendships in which men's pleasure in one another—vanity, interest, the accident of a common experience or memory, a common aversion, a similarity of opinion—prompts two human beings to call each other friend. The greater meaning measures the smaller.

Friendship presupposes as a matter of course that friends care for and help each other and share their joys and sorrows. Neither he who gives nor he who receives need remember or credit such care and help. From friendship common interests and co-operation arise. Common interests, care, and work stabilize friendship; they may even generate it, as through them men open themselves to one another. What is essential and undeniable is that even friendships whose first cause seems to be some kind of usefulness grow far beyond this usefulness and become friendships for the sake of friendship and not from ulterior motives. In the diversity of interrelated circumstances, mutable causes, occasions, motives, may give a great many answers to the impatient question, why?—the 'what' is merely one.

One can court this 'what' with various words, and a great many books offer a great many answers, good and bad. Obviously there is a give and take, each one giving to and receiving from the friend a part of what he is for himself. Being-to-others is part of our being-to-ourselves. This is the actual case in all friendship though it may and need not be expressed in this way. The I knows itself as the You of another I. Friendship enjoys being You, though it is aware that only an I, in the obstinacy of a nature of its own, can be a You—as an object of curiosity and a source of surprise. Hence friendship respects the I of the other. We could use the clumsy marvel of a definition in which Hegel defines love as a Self's consciousness of having his self-consciousness in the self-consciousness of another, if the term self-consciousness did not carry with it the entire burden of Hegel's ontology. Friends enjoy being together. When separated, they want to hear from each other and long to know how the other thinks



or would think about this or that experience if he could share it. Whether together or apart they demand from each other the resonance of their questions and answers. This does not mean that they repeat and merely confirm what the other knows or feels. It is the kind of resonance that convinces them that they are friends. This resonance is not merely agreement of opinion about single things. It may be opinion about a single thing. But in this single thing the unity of a whole becomes visible. This whole may seem elusive; it may often resist the power of speech. Even when two I's hold the same opinion, each remains an I. Dissenting opinions of friends are about single things, which though ambiguous as single things remain within the unity of a whole. The controversial figure stands on the same ground. The loud or quiet talk of friends, be it sparing or lavish of words, carries the words and the single things they denote toward a part of a horizon; from there they reverberate as equal or unequal opinions within one and the same world, moved by the same air. Such resonance is the joy in the talk of friends. When we ask what it is about which there is and must be agreement, we can point to that part of a horizon; or if such a part should be something too tangible to express an intangible thing, we can speak of the vibrations (or waves) of the air that are of the same sort, or take refuge in the invisible harmony, which, according to Heraclitus, is stronger than the visible, or in something else with a similar meaning.

The most defective of all such formulations describes friendship and love as identification, feeling as one. But without the difference, the otherness of the other, the intensity of the twoness, the doubleness of man as I and You, we could not even feel, let alone delight in, this oneness. At any rate, friendship is a give and take. Answers and questions vibrate—a piece of a horizon becomes visible and embraces the friends. When we are not friends, nothing vibrates and nothing reverberates. In that piece of a horizon becoming visible, friends have their worlds twice—as mine and as yours, yet as one and the same and so much richer world. This holds also for the love between the sexes, as far as it is love and not only sex.



When we are friends You are my 'other', I am yours—in a specific sense of 'other': the other-to-me, as if there were only one other of this otherness. The friend is *alter*, the other, not *alius*, another. Thus, even friendship and not only love can be jealous. There should be no *alius* to take my place as *alter*.

Seldom does the great meaning of friendship become a reality; still less often does this reality persist in the manifold conflicts of ideas and interests of obstinate, flighty, much plagued man. The great meaning, whether known or unknown, is everywhere and always the same. Its roots are in the immutable ground of all social life. It is one of the first 'facta,' not less original than hunger, fear of death, vanity, interest, and will to power. It may but need not be in the love between the sexes.

Friendships vary in many ways according to the nature of the thing itself. They grow and develop. Their intensity increases with the expected resonance. They become firm and strong, provided they respect the not always visible boundaries of possible resonance. When they overstep the boundaries, they weaken the expectation of future and the power of remembered resonance.

Friendship, therefore, carefully respects a boundary beyond which an answer is neither asked nor given, a friendship area whose secrets the individual shares with himself alone. It is dangerous to disregard this private precinct.

Friends, when separated, may lose each other. Each may have changed in going his own way. When they meet again and sense a cleavage, they keep silent about it for the sake of the great thing that was—their friendship. Or they feel, with astonishment and joy, that, despite all change, they are the same to each other—in a deeper layer, the only one that matters.

Friendship proper is between individuals. It is voluntary by nature. The friend becomes a friend, chosen by, not given to, the I. Hence it cannot be commanded or regulated. It happens as a fortunate incident either within institutional groups of society or across them, freely binding this one human being to this other one.



The theory of society shows little interest in friendship. We are aware of the social role it plays only when the institutional pre-given You—kin or its equivalents—fails. Then we speak of friendship as a great and precious thing of the society as well as of the individual.

The society lives as society in an ever again reborn and ever again precarious unity of response, care, and work in which its members remain willing and able to see through one another's eyes and aware of the others' perspectives, try to retain and defend their own perspective with respect to both this and that single thing and to the greater world, the gods, the way of life, or the image of man. Herein hangs the life and the freedom of a society as society.

This, however, is only the general element of friendship as friendliness in communication and understanding, without which a society could not remain a society. It is not yet friendship in the greater sense of the great word. But society needs even this greater friendship, though the theory of society may disregard it as the individual's private concern.

This emphatic friendship binds individuals qua individuals to each other, the total human being to the total human being, not only the merchant in metals to the merchant in metals, or the bridge player to the bridge player, or the party member to the party member. Freely it roams or at least wants to roam across the existing ties of interest, institutions, and opinions, as caprice, accident, and intangible affinities would have it. Yet even this is not its sole function.

Friendship is not so much concerned with agreement of opinions about a this or that. If it is friendship, it can bear with, even enjoy, a great many disagreements. It reaches out behind all single opinions for a piece of a sky in the light of which the matters of such disagreement do not matter—something difficult to be said in words which usually remains unsaid and at any rate need not be said. It is a rather peculiar kind of light whose color belongs to the friends alone and to no one else. It is not to be found in a general notion, not in an inherited idea, not in a great word of habit or tradition. It is a property of the friends, new and a tiny bit different



from any common idea shared by the larger society. Even if it were only this, it would be something rediscovered and endowed with new life. By virtue of this achievement of friendship, human meanings can be preserved while changing, and change while being preserved.

Whenever a society is shaken and the universe of response or the traditional ties break asunder, it becomes manifest how much depends upon the social role of unknown and publicly unnoticed friendships: not only the living force of any new meaning or the new life of any old meaning but also the salvation of the *humanum* in man through smoke and rubble, through all the passionate blindness, through war, "its might of the moment only, its rage and boundless grief."<sup>25</sup>

The tyrants of all times dislike friendship and persecute it; the freedom of a society survives in its friendships. Herein friendship seems to be friendship between human beings of the same age. The quiet step of a society and its cultural growth depends upon whether friendship binds here and there even the old and the young. In this case giving and receiving differ in kind.

The longer memory of the old seems to give as they teach, the shorter memory of the young seems to receive as they learn. But the teaching old receive from the learning youth a share in their longer expectation, in their winged hope and their eager curiosity, if and only if friendship makes the teacher look with the eyes of the young at what he teaches and listen to the resonance in the soul of the young.

What is received cannot be merely a remembered past or information or factual knowledge, however useful. It is not only a this or that or merely a sum of things that should be known, but all these together as something that is seen with the inner eye and points beyond itself. It is rather a manner of seeing, feeling, thinking, and acting, in which the single thing is no longer a single thing, but full of a meaning that expands over other things and permeates a manifold variety by virtue of its inherent life as image, myth, poem, or idea. When such a meaning of what is taught can force the things of a present to tell their tale, the doctrine taught, the memory



transmitted, the human image enacted by father, teacher, or master can gently guide the vacillating young into the unknown future.

Rarely does the teacher become an educator, the educator a friend. When amid the mass of 'material' to be taught and learned, in the hurried change of the many teachers of some partial knowledge and their many pupils, it will be a lucky accident if the teacher becomes a friend. Institutions are without power; rarely in history have the customs of a society for a while tied the pupils to self-chosen teachers; the teacher to self-chosen pupils.

Friendship between old and young may be relatively easy as long as each believes he moves in a space that stands still. It becomes more difficult and rare when this space and with it man's image of his life begins to move. Now the change itself, the ever doubtful interpretation of 'history' should bare the meaning. Yet change changes also this interpretation, as ever again a changing expectation calls for a changing memory, an ever new present demands to be justified ever anew.

When finally man loses his own image to the restless change of conditions and interprets himself as product of indefinitely changing conditions, the memory of the old and the expectation of the young will seek each other in vain. Teaching and learning will be of a dispersed diversity and not touch a meaning that could survive the change of conditions.

Both love and friendship are loosely used words. We draw dubious demarcation lines, more or less arbitrary, but find it difficult to hold to them as we face the ambivalence of the phenomena. However defined, friendship will always reach far into the area we call love, love far into the area we call friendship. Many things are true of friendship that are true of some love, and vice versa. We can easily give sex and its libido such an extensive meaning in sublimating it that it becomes all-comprehensive or such a narrow meaning as a mere biological occurrence that it no longer has anything to do with love itself. This is, however, not merely the arbitrariness of loose thinking. Sexuality, physiologically defined, some-



times meant very much, sometimes very little, in the mutable life of man's mutable societies.

Mere friendship can, love cannot, be one-sided. Love is a passion; it longs for the total, even unique possession of that tangible soul we call body or of that intangible body we call soul—yea of both, of the one in the other. Thus human beings in love long to give themselves to each other. As real passion love has difficulty in respecting the I and its secret in the You—these boundaries friendship is careful to respect. Hence love seldom originates and hardly ever ends in friendship.

Though 'great passion' is rare, it is the measure of the less great, which is less great by what it lacks—the horrible, the unconditionally unreasonable, the limitless. The fire of the great passion tends to devour the I in both the loving and the beloved You, while in the struggle of a boundless devotion with a boundless claim, love will enhance the loving I and the beloved You beyond all limits. Finally, the fire of the sublime foolishness and the sweet illusion destroys only itself; burning up the You in the I, not the I in the You.

All love woos. We speak of love even when a friend desires only friendship, parents or grandparents the love of their children and grandchildren, sisters the love of their brothers, boys the love of their teachers.

As little Jim loves little Harry and wants to be his friend, he looks at himself with Harry's eyes. He will divine what Harry would be pleased to see in him. Love is a good diviner. Jim shows his best side, hides other sides. He may even try to seem to be what he is not and perhaps even succeed without effort. Love achieves much without any effort. What is Jim? He is a great many potential, slightly different Jims. Through the power of love he will become just that one Harry will love. Jim's own love begins the work; Harry's love will finish it. Thus love is the greatest former of men and women. This power of forming works silently; we are scarcely aware of it.

Love creates an image of the beloved in the soul of the lover and readily transcends whatever the beloved really is or ever could be. Both friends and lovers enhance each other,



first in images, then in realities of seeming, even of being. Passion easily demands too much. Yet by demanding too much, it achieves much, however great the danger and penalty of disillusion.

Plato's sublime language, "the birth of the beautiful in the beautiful", should not make suspect its bit of truth in each love that is love. The beauty of the beloved may be beauty in the eyes only of the lover and only for a dream's while. Yet even such dream-borrowed beauty of the beloved adorns the soul of the lover with a gleam of light.

My love for you kindles other flames in my soul. Many things grow warm and some, though a moment ago still dull and wan, begin to shine. Love compels the things to respond. Mute stones and plants begin to speak. Love is creative. Everywhere it awakens the sleeping poet. Love is desire, but what it desires is love; the lover only, not the beloved, reaps the harvest. The beloved must love in order to enjoy its sweetness.

Most lovers are in love with love, perhaps more than with the beloved. According to a saying of one of the great French moralists, only the first love of a lady is for the beloved; each further one is for love.

Don Juan, the genius of desire or of curiosity in desire, is certainly more in love with love than with Donna Anna, perhaps even more with his sweet desire than with love. Yet at this moment it must be just and absolutely Donna Anna and no one else. Even the lover of love must love for love's sake just this particular being who, even in this love for love, is for the moment irreplaceable.

This desire is indeed man's most violent and lustful desire, in the satisfaction of which man accidentally reproduces his kind. Though its violence may be the sharpest spur to love and the simplest answer to the 'why', the biological urge and its satisfaction do not answer the 'what' of love. The what reaches far beyond the why.

Love desires more. Without knowledge of this 'more', men should not speak of love. Not without difficulty have we separated man and animal, soul and body, mind and nature. In this separation animal, body, and nature have lost their



innocence; man, soul, and mind—the color of blood. One of the only two sentences from Aristotle's *Erotikos* that have been preserved runs: "Lovers look into each other's eyes, not at other parts of their bodies. For in the eyes *Aidos* dwells." Sex without love avoids the eyes.

Though there are societies in which the satisfaction of the sexual urge has little to do with anything that could be called love or friendship, few developed cultures fail to take advantage of the possibilities the body and sensuous delight offer to that 'more' in love.

Love too is difficult to institutionalize. Its beginning and end are not to be commanded; no more is the choice of the beloved. Since society must regulate love, it trusts that in marriage habit, interest, care, and compulsion will let a remnant of love survive as companionship.

Many societies, however, cannot avoid making some allowances; they silently grant illicit love a more or less restricted and sometimes carefully fenced area in which the pleasure of play, curiosity, and desire can freely roam at will, with or without love.

As friendship branches out in many small meanings down to our friendship of interest and entertainment, so we can distinguish from passionate love, love for interest, curiosity, vanity, or for pleasure and lust. In the game of the sexes which some past societies developed to perfection and regulated by rules of tact, politeness, and discretion as *galanterie*, all these kinds of love entwine; the players delight in the ambiguous mixture of hiding, seeking, and divining. Even in *galanterie* an I and a You give to and take from each other the semblance and the truth of their feelings and enjoy the interaction of the forces that move their society.

Romanticists say that in love the individual transcends his world. But transcendence is of various kinds. The individual escapes the prison of his mere ego, but he does not melt away or lose his distinct shape. Rather the contrary; he is only more himself. He who gives himself is given to himself. "The more I give to thee the more I have", says Juliet.<sup>26</sup> As You the I learns to know the I as I. Transcendence is limited. Even in



passionate rapture we remain ourselves. There is always something in us that is not given away. To this we return. Dionysus' maenads too return to their own selves.

When love tries to say what it really longs for, it transcends all reality. Love's speech about love is utopian. Like other utopists, love easily forgets that utopias usually do not survive attempts at their realization.

Love as desire aims at the now. It wants to drink in the moment—for the sake of the moment it swears it will last. Its eternity is the moment. In this it does not need great words. Lovers, given to the now though they may not trust it to last, delight in each other, in the responses of their so-called bodies to their so-called souls. Herein love has its greatest triumph; it can give a soul to the body and a body to the soul and be entirely sure of itself, whatever the theologian, the physiologist, or the biologist may say against it.

Friendship, however, wants to last. It too, like love, may need semblance and illusion. But it is cautious. Its semblance and illusion must at least seem to last.

Like love, friendship too can perish. Then all the illusion collapses; not only the illusion, but also all the truth that has been. The I is once more alone with itself.

All the talk about empathy, identification, abandonment of the self has never been more than romantic talk, against which love and friendship are defenseless by nature. The I remains unescapable. Love and friendship rediscover the boundaries they tried to deny. They must discover and they must deny them. Unable to bear truth, life needs to dream. To the I that is again merely an I, the You is again only another I—alien, inaccessible. But this You could never have been a You unless from the beginning it had been another I.

Like the conflict between my thing and the thing itself, between our world and the world, the conflict between the I as I and the I as You is inevitable. Hence in theory men treat the You as mere semblance and isolate the I. But the I alone with itself would be nothing to itself.

Friendship and love are relations between human beings. But they too cannot be isolated. They have great power over



man's relations to himself, which their absence can hurt, their presence heal. Their power is power over the relation of friends or lovers to the single things, to the world, to themselves, even over the relation of their things to their world. Thus their power reaches beyond the relation between human beings to the indivisible fabric in which man, thing, and world are linked together.

Everyone can sense this power of friendship and love in himself and others any day in the joy or bitterness of their presence or absence.

The caves, woods, and cities of man are narrow. Men encroach upon one another's manifold desires and interests.

A thirsty man is sitting at a table; another hits the table, upsetting his drink. We are in a hurry to put on our shoes; we break the lace. A girl dances; her clumsy partner steps on her toes. An involuntary interference in our want, need, or action of the moment makes us angry. Even animals get angry in such cases.

Anger overcomes us—against our will. Surprise lets the situation of the moment get out of hand. A part prevails over the whole. In anger of this sort man does not behave as a whole toward the whole in which he is. That, however, he 'should' do—and not merely because society demands it. Thus man, when overcome by anger, gets angry at his own anger.

Individuals differ in the violence of their outbursts of anger and rage, their self-control, the quickness with which they calm down. In the interest of sociability all societies, primitive and civilized, condemn intentional interference, demand apologies, praise self-control and forgiveness—by social norms of behavior, custom, tact, manners.

We differentiate between indignation and anger. We feel indignation when an encroachment violates not an action or interest of a moment but the alleged order of the whole in which we live. Such indignation can be devoid of anger; it will mingle with anger when the interference is unexpected and encroaches on both our acting of the moment and the order of the whole. We laugh at the anger in the indignation



of the righteous person who regards any interference in his personal interests as encroachment upon the order of the world. Anger mounts to rage; indignation waxes into holy wrath, in the name of some god or of justice.

When encroachment of one man on another man's needs, desires, or actions is repeated or lasts or extends to his entire acting and desiring, men react with hostility and hate. They act to defend and protect themselves. He who encroaches becomes an enemy. Sympathy or antipathy retards or quickens the growth of enmity.

Hostility, impotent or unsuccessful, becomes hate. The less efficient the defense the more intense the hate. In efficient defense hostility fades. When the encroachment impairs something no defense can restore, hate outlives defense.

Since hostility and hate spring from encroachment and mere antipathy causes only withdrawal, the first aggressor is free from hostility and hate. The Carthaginian, Greek, Spaniard, or Englishman landing on an unknown shore is without hostility or hate, though he may be greedy or hungry, ambitious or suspicious. He meets resistance. To him the resistance is interference with his needs, desires, and actions. Now only does he feel hostility.

These remarks are not intended to come to the support of a utopian goodness of human nature or of universal love. They are meant to refute the silly construction of an original drive of hostility and aggression which, as antisocial impulse, opposes the social impulse. There is nothing of that kind. There is encroachment, always and much of it. Hate and love are not twins. Empedocles says they are ἴσα καὶ ἡλίχα γένναν<sup>27</sup>—equally strong and of the same birth. They may be equally strong, but hate is younger and of a different mother. Some kind of love for something is prior to any kind of hostility.

The question, what is hate? is best addressed to its purest manifestation: that dark, bitter, and destructive hate that can bind two human beings to each other by chains not weaker than the chains of love. Your benefit is my detriment, your joy my sorrow, your tears my laughter, your love my hate, and your hate my love. What to you is ugly will to me be



beautiful; what to you is good will to me be bad. Slave to my hatred, I look at you ere I look at the innocent things and the sky behind them. I will say 'no' to your 'yes' and 'yes' to your 'no'. Also, in loving you I may be your slave, but in love the thing at which I look with your eyes as if they were mine becomes richer and fuller. Hate is not a builder. It tears down the things that already 'are'. When it occurs between former friends or lovers it demolishes any remnant of memory and meaning. Hate knows no sky.

Hate too is never alone. I hate you because you hurt something I love. My hate and this love can even feed on each other. Sometimes we do not discover our love until we are hurt.

Like love, hate need not be mutual. Yet hate can enjoy a response in kind. We may conceal our hate out of caution for a while. But in successful revenge hate enjoys coming into the open. There are as many degrees and kinds of hate as of love.

Encroachment can be interference in the relation between an I and an It—of need, desire, or interest. It can be interference in the relation between an I and a You or a You and a We, in claims that men make on one another and their groups. It can be encroachment on the relation between men or between the group and the world, the gods or their equivalents; finally, on man's relation to himself. Since, however, these relations cannot be isolated, every violation of any can affect all the others so that any encroachment, when deep enough, can injure the whole. This holds for every time and society from Cain to Hitler.

A tribe, in hunger or greed, hunts or fishes in another tribe's woods or waters. The cattle breeders drive their cattle into the fields of the wheatgrowers. Interests clash; hostility springs up. Interests can be compromised; a compromise can end the hostility before the harm goes beyond mere interest. But if year after year the cattle breeders trample down the fields of the wheatgrowers, the wheatgrowers will defend themselves; some will be slain, their wives raped, their holy places desecrated. Now not only interests clash. The spilled



blood, the offended honor, the desecrated holiness demand retaliation.

A tribe, through fear or ignorance, interferes in things or actions sacred to another tribe. Even modern nations do it. A tribe fells a holy tree, defiles a holy stone, kills the sacred animal of another tribe. Such interference can cut more deeply than interference in material interests. Some gods allow no compromise. Here the relation of an I or We to the whole of the world is encroached upon. Gods dwell near an ultimate horizon. The gods may be replaced by ideas, the ideas by words, as long as even words point to the whole of a sky, however drab, that claims to embrace the world of a We. Mortal men will persecute, hate, kill one another in the name of immortal gods, futile ideas, or hazy words.

The life of the individual repeats the story. Jack loves Maria. But Maria talks only about Jim. Jack's antipathy to Jim will grow into hate the more his love for his Maria pervades his world and the greater Jim's influence becomes over Maria's ways of thinking and feeling.

Interference in the relation between man and himself is a still more powerful source of hate. A man puts another human being to shame. You are confronted with your own meanness. Your image of yourself is broken. You despise yourself. You will hate the man who put you to shame. This hate is the most bitter of all, the most difficult to heal. It has the longest memory. Shame burns. Perhaps decades later you will suddenly remember and blush.

The victor should never humiliate the vanquished he will not or cannot annihilate. A teacher should never put a child to shame. When he cannot avoid it, he should keep away any observer. Resentment easily mingles with all sorts of hate, multiplying their force.

Most hostility and the most common group hate come to be not between groups but within a group: the family or the family clan, political parties, or religious sects. Civil war is more cruel, passionate, merciless than national war not only because the human beings who hate one another are fettered to the same group, from which they cannot withdraw, be-



cause encroachment is more frequent and inevitable, or because knowledge about the opponent is greater, or because he who hates is more ingenious and he who is hated more vulnerable. The whole in which I am—my world—is at stake. 'My world' is indivisible. When the others succeed in making it theirs, it ceases to be mine, my people, my country, my faith. In the case of the hate of religious sects, it is the indivisible god: my Christ is not yours, yet there can be only one Christ. Moslems may survive; Albigenses must be exterminated. The not-yet-total wars of the European nations in the nineteenth century did not breed the hate of the French Revolution or of the American Civil War, in which an incompatible image of what the country was or should be was aligned with opposite interests.

In every case of a fully grown hate, various kinds and origins of hate coalesce. When the waters of different rivers mix, we may be able to distinguish their colors for a while. Only at the beginning can the different sources of hate be distinguished.

Not only actual but also alleged interference can generate hate. There is another man whose ways, behavior, or mere existence is a mute reproach to me, an image of a life I cannot attain. Though he does me no harm, he interferes with the I conversing with its Me and the image of what it is, could be, wants to be. In my daily awareness of his existence my antipathy grows into hate.

Though in our modern society of multiple, dispersed hostilities and friendships, both love and hate are rarely passions of the whole man, we meet, in groups of different religions, customs, ways, or races, a powerful collective hate of dubious origin which we deplore as prejudice. On closer scrutiny neither the individual Jew, Negro, Japanese, capitalist, or communist, nor the actual group as such, is found to be the hated object; it is an image of what the group and its members is supposed to represent. All that is hateful or contemptible—filth, fraud, dishonesty, deception, cruelty, exploitation, greed, usury—is loaded on this image. Truth matters little; arguments are powerless. The images persist—and for many



miseries the Jews are held responsible. Only with great difficulty and pain does man recognize the causes of his misfortunes. He is loath to admit that he himself may be among them. The simplest answer is the image of that generalized other whose existence, activity, competition, and behavior disturb him.

Man, unsure of himself, in need of an image of what he could be, should be, would like to be, yet unable to give it any positive content, reaches for the negative image. Now he can at least despise.

Revenge and gratitude occur in every society however diverse their expression, valuation, promotion, and hindrance by norms and customs, material conditions, social structures, and images of man in different ages and cultures. Animals too are vengeful and grateful—within the narrow range of their memory, their means, and ingenuity. Since man's memory is longer, his power to remember and forget is greater. Ingratitude and forgiveness, postponed revenge and its cold relish, seem to be privileges of man.

Man, when recipient of harm or help, offense or favor, wishes to balance the account—he does not like to be in debt. This impulse; however mutable in expression and intensity, is not a norm of a mutable society. Man will requite, as long as he remembers. The harm or favor, when not repaid, is a dark spot on the image of the self everyone carries in his soul whether aware of it or not. Hence revenge and gratitude belong together. They have the same origin. Nonetheless, Swift's statement that men are grateful to the same degree as they are vindictive hardly holds. Favors are more easily forgotten than offenses. Man's power to remember and forget is not the same in the two cases. Vanity magnifies offenses and belittles favors.

Having paid back, we allow ourselves to forget. Reciprocation seems to restore. What is restored, however, is not the past itself but its image. Remembrance loses its sting. The degree and extent of vindictiveness are mutable; they may vary from man to man, from society to society, from age to age. The power of memory and expectation over each other changes; the stress, here on the past, is there on the future.



Old age is more vindictive than youth. Men, individuals as well as groups, are more or less vulnerable. The vulnerability increases with the lability of man's relation to himself. The offense that scarcely hurts a man who is pleased with himself cuts one less sure of himself deeply.

Some damages cannot be compensated. My putting out your eye does not give me back mine. It is easier to repair material damage than the dignity of a god. To restore self-respect may be still more difficult.

Vindictive action can be done without hatred. The impotence that creates hate may be due to the irreparability of the damage or the inability to take revenge. When harm cannot be compensated, or worse, when my image of myself is destroyed, my hate may outlive even successful revenge. Such hate demands two eyes for one. When the order of the world of the righteous is violated and indignation joins vindictiveness, it will be insatiable. This holds also in the life of a nation.

There are many kinds of 'resentment'. When continuous failure and continuous comparison destroy man's relation to himself and to his image, resentment will become a passion, pervading the entire man, poisoning all his thinking and feeling. It presses all other passions into service and becomes the source of a force that astonishes all half-contented people.

Some time ago the force of an insatiable hate drove a man first to dominate his own people, then almost the world. He would have been a petty and half ridiculous man, mediocre and irrelevant, if the insatiable hate in the depths of his soul had not instilled in him a passion, coldness, tenacity, ingenuity of willing and acting far beyond that of the better, happier, more reasonable men of his day. This man and his initial successes will remain a riddle for quite a while.

His hate was bred by humiliation, failure, poorhouses—a hate of everyone he thought different, better, happier—and through it all hate of himself. Thus he escaped from his own self into a task and an image of himself beyond all he could be and achieve. This task was to him the dream of a power that promised opportunity for revenge. He gathered around him all the outcasts, misfits, malformed, disappointed, and embittered.



tered, and conquered power and took revenge upon all kinds of things and types of men he held responsible for himself. In the end he insisted upon ruining his nation with himself. People say he was mad, but the only extraordinary thing was the intensity of his passionate will. Cases on a smaller scale, with or without crime, happen every day.

Not all revenge likes to be called by its own honest name. Much revenge is taken in the name of justice and leads far beyond justice. Many an injustice is done for the sake of justice. Some justices would never be done were it not for the sake of revenge.

All societies regulate and limit individual retaliation and its modes. Revenge persists whenever, amid the entanglements of interests, worries, and fears with prudence, man has time to remember. After it ceases to demand blood, it still wants tears and sorrow. When incapable of action, it at least curses as long as there are gods or demons whom the power of a curse could persuade to take on the revenge of man.

By adding incentives against or for revenge, customs and social norms can decrease or increase the amount of consummated revenge. The desire for revenge varies only within certain limits. We cannot draw inferences from man's ways of speaking to his actions. Here men boast about, there they conceal, successful revenge. In our individual life we are doubtless not as vengeful as men were in other ages, yet perhaps for no other reason than that we calculate profit and risk, and think of tomorrow. Revenge is bad business. We have, moreover, set our hearts on many things a little and on nothing entirely.

In political society regard for possible future co-operation, common advantages, compromise, and collusion bridle revenge. Elsewhere we may find man not less vengeful than he used to be, though perhaps less honest.

All men know gratitude. It is not merely a social norm. Even the ingrate sometimes feels the sting of an unrequited favor. When we have repaid it, we are allowed to forget. If we cannot repay, we at least try to forget. He who can neither repay in kind nor forget may repay with love. Some



of those who cannot repay unconsciously transmute the favor into an offense. Some gratitude becomes ingratitude though there is no forgetting.

Hence favors that cannot be repaid must be done graciously, lest they hurt. The eternal though unwritten law of tact requires that favors that cannot be repaid should not be done as favors and not call for gratitude. We dislike receiving benefits from men we despise or dislike. Friendship keeps no accounts.

In vindictiveness as in gratitude man wants to be to others what they are to him, as far as he can and as far as his other passions permit.

In many a deep misery there can be revenge, and in many a great happiness, gratitude without particular object. This revenge takes itself out upon anything, innocent or not; this gratitude overflows toward all things, men, and gods.



## *Chapter 6*

### ENVY AND ITS KIN

ENVY RANGES between two poles. I envy you. I wish I were as beautiful as you. This envy is innocuous. Into it sneaks an envy of a different kind. Since I cannot be or have this or that, you should not be or have it either. Envy becomes begrudging; begrudging fosters hate. Eventually I enjoy your losing what you have—riches, status, looks. This kind of envy too, though dependent upon specific conditions, accompanies man as possibility throughout his history.

Even animals are envious. In both animals and men envy can precede desire. The sight of your property arouses my cupidity. Envy is ashamed of itself.<sup>28</sup> Few admit envy unless under the guise of a demand for justice. People say: he is better off than he deserves; and think: I am worse off than I deserve. Without this disguise our pride would fight our envy.

Envy takes devious paths. When the envious can neither deny nor conceal the superiority he envies, he resorts to a god in whose eyes it is irrelevant. The gods of ascetic religions healed a great deal of envy.

One should not deceive oneself and too quickly infer absence of envy from the silence of a society about its envy.

Envy presupposes comparison. He who never compares is without envy.



*Er achtet Eurer Ehren nicht.  
Er hat des Adlers Auge für die Ferne  
Er sieht Euch nicht  
Er sieht nur Sterne—Sterne.*<sup>29</sup>

The quantity and intensity of envy change as societies change. They are dependent upon the strength of individual desires, the amount of comparison, the opportunities for individual success, the average complacency, the glorification of individual achievement. The verdict of official morality has little influence. It usually has more power over the words of the tongue than over the things of the heart. Man's nature is less mutable than his thoughts about his nature.

As long as a rigidly stratified society is accepted by the lower strata as an inherent part of the order of the world, comparisons are made only within a class, not between classes. The castes of India did not compare their lots. Man envies his peers. In the England that is now passing, the small bourgeois read without envy about the hunts, yachts, parties, gardens of Lord X or the gowns of Lady Y.

In a democratic country of great opportunities the humble salesgirl consumes avidly the reports in her tabloid about the splendor of Hollywood, the magnificence of a wedding, or the doings of an heiress. She dreams about a chance that will lead her to Hollywood or in a Fortuny gown to the altar. The envy of the lower classes is tinged with only a little begrudging as long as the individual can hope that, if not he himself, at least his children or grandchildren may attain the envied position.

Business competition invokes comparison; yet in prosperous times it breeds little envy. If you can be successful, I can. The business man of the capitalist age believes in himself. Things change when man doubts his opportunities. When chances are blocked or monopolized, though a theoretical equality continues to suggest comparison, envy and begrudging have their day.

The Greeks confessed their envy. They let even their gods be envious. The envy of their gods was intended only to



warn the proud not to trespass on the boundaries of mortal man. The Greeks needed the warning; they cultivated, admired, enjoyed, the splendor and power of the individual.

The envy of those who are sure of themselves can be without begrudging. Sympathy unconsciously decreases, antipathy increases, our envy. Friendship and love are without envy. We might assume that the members of the caveman's family did not envy one another. They envied the success of the next cave's family. Yet brother probably envied brother, sister sister, if their parents showered more care or love on them. They may have hunted and fished as members of the family. But even they may have demanded individual approval and recognition. Cain, the wheatgrower, envies Abel, the cattle breeder, because he stands higher in Jehovah's favor.

Such envy we call jealousy. Your friendship or love should belong to me, not to him. In the love between the sexes jealousy grows into a violent passion which in some can excuse even murder. Jealousy, however, is by no means restricted to sex. It can be felt ere love is recognized as love. I am jealous; could it be that I am in love? Jealousy can even outlive love; from it we infer that our love too still lives.

If sexual intercourse were merely the satisfaction of a sexual urge, there would hardly be any jealousy. Jealousy springs not only from fear of losing a partner, of being compelled to look for another. It is this particular partner that matters.

The We of lovers, though not the most durable relationship, is the most intimate, most vulnerable, most intended to be exclusive. It is the We of an I and his-for-the-time-being-unique You. The jealous person watches a precious good. Your feeling for someone else alters and limits the response of both your body and your soul to my question. The uniqueness of the We as my own We slips away.

The anthropologist might point to societies that were allegedly without jealousy—the host offers his wife to his guests—or to one of the rather rare or dubious cases where promiscuity is general. Such cases, however, even if more frequent and authenticated, would hardly prove that jealousy owes its origin to social norms and institutions. Not only because



closer observation would probably discover some jealousy. These cases would merely show that here sexual intercourse plays a relatively irrelevant role in the relations between human beings.

Joy over the misfortunes of others occurs in the course of hostility, hatred, resentment, revenge, humiliation, envy, and jealousy. To them it owes whatever power it may have. Joy over the failure of a rival is usually joy over one's own indirect advantage. Whenever such malicious joy is unadulterated, that is, is simply enjoyment of misfortune as misfortune, he who feels it is at odds with himself, the others, and with the world, and enjoys the fall of happier men. That is the sole joy left to him.

If the blessed in heaven really enjoy serene happiness, they need not look at the tortures of the damned.<sup>30</sup>

Men can share in both the misery and joy of others beyond the restricted community of close response. We can pity the misery of human beings we do not know.

We pity animals, but not all. We pity those in whose suffering we can recognize the human lot. We do not pity the worm or the fly. We might pity them; we might pity even the trees and the flowers if we knew how similar their lot is to ours.

Pity is nearer our senses than our intellect. A sensuous image of suffering can be difficult to bear. If we cannot help, we close our eyes. Mere thought without sensuous image has little power over most men.

Pity compares. This suffering we pity is something that could happen or has happened to us. A shadow of fear, another of gratitude falls on our pity. Quite a few wealthy people in feeling pity for the poor congratulate themselves on their riches.

In an age of theoretical equality and hence of general comparison we may feel pity for most people on the earth. Since so much pity would break our hearts, we look away or become partly blind.

We do not merely compare our lots. We grieve over the



order of things that makes your misery possible. This order is the order of our world too. We wish it were different.

When not long ago a society that has not yet entirely disappeared painted the world in pale rose, some people could conquer pity only by explaining the misery as a well-deserved punishment for sin. The righteous, who deems himself in perfect harmony with the moral order of the world, quickly draws conclusions from suffering to guilt, individual or collective, acquired or inherited, and enjoys his righteousness.

We feel more pity for undeserved than deserved misfortune. We readily rejoice in deserved, reluctantly in undeserved, luck. Many who cannot evade the enormous amount of undeserved misery balance the account by adding the values of a life in a world beyond.

Hard times talk little of pity; the pity felt is more honest.

In all this we should never forget that in every concrete case of pity as well as of any other sentiment, all the other passions interfere, fostering or hampering pity.

Present-day man, who interprets by mutable norms whatever biology leaves open, would profit from reading the chapter of *Rhetoric* in which Aristotle expounds, for the purposes of the orator, who is likely to feel pity for whom and why. He will not find much to correct despite the two thousand years and the changes in valuations.

Few languages have a term for our sharing in others' joy. German makes little use of *Mitsfreude*. Pity demands action; sharing in joy does not. Such joy exists, whatever the reason for the lack of a word. In some ages the lower classes seem more disposed to enjoy vicariously the pleasures of the higher classes than the latter to feel for the misery of the former. We are glad to know that happiness is possible in this miserable world.

Norms, courtesy, and tact require that human beings, beyond the bonds of love and friendship, at least pretend to participate in one another's grief and joy. We fear the sight of our joy may aggravate the grief of another, the sight of our sorrow disturb his joy. Festivals, whether dedicated to grief



or joy, imply that shared sorrow alleviates sorrow, shared joy enhances joy.

The Christian does not stress sharing in others' joy. The emphasis is on loving pity. But even pity existed before Christianity, though not pity for everyone, which is still mostly theoretical.

However that may be, in their emphasis on interest and power, social theories underestimate the role of men's benevolence toward, and pleasure in, one another. Without the thousand small things and acts this benevolence and pleasure daily mix into the interplay of interest and power, society is unthinkable.



## *Chapter 7*

# PRIDE AND HUMILITY

**P**RIDE AND HUMILITY TOO, though in each case unique and even mutable, are eternally human. Around them stand vanity, conceit, superciliousness, arrogance, ambition, passion for glory, shame, and awe—with blurred boundary lines of both words and thing, in many mixtures and transitions. In all, man's relations to himself, to other men, to things, and to the world fuse in many ways, resisting order and classification.

When Adam and Eve had exchanged the peaceful boredom of Eden for the tensions of joy and misery, cupidity and satisfaction, success and failure, and had conquered the worst fear, want, and dirt, they soon learned pride and humility. Adam fells a tree, invents a tool, slays a bear, builds a hut, and forms an image of God. He looks proudly at his handiwork. However, a tree too hard to be felled, a bear too strong to be slain, a God greater than any image, the silent power of the wood, fuse humility into Adam's pride. From the first to the last Adam, man moves to and fro between some kind of pride and some kind of humility.

Adam shares this first pride and humility with any directed and finite system that strives, acts, and is acted upon, and is able to refer its parts to its whole. Pride and humility are patterns of movement of such systems.



In this first sense pride and humility are opposite relations between goal and achievement, demand and result, will and capacity. However far man's pride and humility may stray, they will never lose a last remainder of that first sense.

Adam's innocent pride in the tree he brought to earth is the relation of man to himself, of an I to a Me with respect to the tree.<sup>31</sup> Here Adam is thought of as an individual. Amid manifold fears and wants this pride may be merely a fleeting sentiment of an instant. Yet here begins Adam's rise. The fleeting sentiment grows into self-trust and becomes a lifelong propensity. Beyond the Me of the moment, perhaps beyond the reality of any Me or even beyond its possibility, pride builds an image of what this Adam believes he is or wants to be.

Albeit this image of the first Adam will probably not be too remote from what this Adam really is or can be, the first sense of pride generates a second sense. Adam as a striving being demands something from himself. He behaves toward an image of himself. By this image he measures himself. Eventually he will be too proud to do this or that. He may not yet know anything about this image except perhaps in the darkness of his soul. It may be rather a silly, and is certainly a modest, image.

Unlike his grandchildren, he, in need and want, amid thunderstorms and wild beasts, will not yet indulge in images of empty dreams. Trees that resist felling will cast a shadow on his pride. Every proud man has some hidden humility; every humble man some hidden pride. Man can think modestly of what he did and be proud of a great deed he feels able to do. Many a man goes proudly from failure to failure; a few modestly from success to success. Whereas pride must be on the lookout for reasons, humility need not—it always has enough.

Up to here pride and humility have been a matter only between the I, the Me, and his image. The I, however, is not alone with itself. Others mingle in; men are proud and modest toward themselves and toward others, of themselves and of others, as individuals, as members of a group, of a social stratum, of their nation. He who as an individual is proud or



modest can be modest or proud as a member of a group, and in the one or the other pride can as man be humble before his god.

I assume Adam's being to Eve is a part of his being to himself. He may really have slain a bear. Eve is proud of him. Her pride enhances his pride. This holds not only for Adam. Not long ago in some countries the pride of the nobility fed only on the bourgeois' pride of their nobility. This particular Adam may not be quite sure of his merits. The bear was old and weak, yet Adam desires Eve's admiration. In still innocuous vanity he bolsters his wavering pride with Eve's praise.

Eve's intimate knowledge of Adam's limitations prevents Adam from putting on airs before Eve. But Adam and Eve are not alone; 'they', the others, do not have Eve's knowledge. The larger society gives Adam a chance to seem what he is not. This chance increases until finally in the mass society of our day even any truth, to be effective, needs the art of seeming. Adam is and seems to the others a great Adam. Eve too enjoys such seeming. Her pride in Adam increases. As Eve of such a great Adam she will look down upon the Eves of other Adams. Adam's pride becomes Eve's arrogance.

As society becomes more complex, possible variations become more numerous. Adam can seem to be what he is not, in his own eyes or in the eyes of others. Many a so-called statesman manages to admire himself for the speech another wrote for him; he makes a servile press praise him and sees himself in the light of a praise he himself inspired. Though the speech, albeit not his own work, may have been of the utmost triviality, he enjoys the semblance of a reflection of a semblance in a semblance of his own making. Vanity plays with pride, semblance with truth, a tortuous play. Pride can become arrogance based on fake.

Vanity is difficult to confine. Like a spot of oil it spreads through the entire tissue. It can join all other passions, lend them its force and suck force from their force. It conquers a share in our love, our vindictiveness, our jealousy, and our envy. It pervades our pride. Yet some vanity is without pride,



some pride without vanity. Some pride is too proud to be vain. Vanity is envious; the pride of the proud refuses to yield to envy. The proud man is confident of himself; the vain man looks upon himself with the eyes of others. The less sure he is of himself, the more dependent he is on the opinion of others to shore up his own image of himself with the others' image of him—always and throughout the earth.

Narcissus delights in his own reflection. Self-sufficient, he needs no others. If we called him vain, we would be making him the other whose admiration he needs. Another man is so sure of his own beauty that he does not look into any lake, does not comb his hair or care about his clothes. Nothing could enhance or diminish his beauty. He is simply pleased with himself, not vain.

Man behaves, wittingly or unwittingly, toward himself. He forms an image of himself and wants to believe in this image. Listening to his own eloquence, he is his own most ardent audience. Such pleasure in oneself is compatible with pride.

Since others' opinions interfere with our own opinion of ourselves, vanity gets a narrower sense: the vain being looks at himself solely with the eyes of others and strains himself to seem to be to others, and through their opinion to himself, what he is not and cannot be. In this narrower sense vanity is satisfied with semblance.

We use vain in the sense of futile—"Vanity of vanities, chasing the wind"—not merely because the things of our vanity quickly pass away. Even the transient can be worth while. White is not less white for being white only a short time. Vanity is futile since it is content to accept semblance for reality.

But what is semblance? Adam knows that he did not slay the bear, even that the bear, despite what he said and the others believe, still roams cheerfully through the wood. About this difference between semblance and reality Adam has no doubts even if he has not read any treatises on the meaning of truth. He learns, however, that semblance, though not what it seems to be, is something very real, because very powerful in



society. As long as the others believe I slew the bear, what does it matter that I did not?

This semblance is as good as truth only until someone calls on Adam to slay a second bear. Since, however, man, even in mere semblance, sets up his image in the eyes of others as an image of himself, he may perhaps make a mighty effort when called upon, and really slay a bear. In this case a semblance of a past will be the truth of a present. Without such a challenge not only will semblance fade little by little; the truth of grandfathers and fathers will become the semblance of children and grandchildren.

Vanity too is a spur. It can claim a share in the beauty of women who do so much to seem what they are not that they finally succeed in being what they seem.

Semblance, though only semblance, is by no means nothing. It presupposes a reality that it pretends to be. As semblance of nothing, it would not even be semblance. To be able to seem, semblance must pretend to be more than mere semblance. Contestable and contested, it must try to give reasons. Though these reasons in turn may be semblance, this second semblance must again, and more effectually, point at the reality it pretends to be.

Adam and Eve, though still an I and a You, are a He and She in a We in which they are somebodies for confronting, in pride or modesty, a They—the others whose opinions give or deny to them status and reputation. Now vanity and pride need ‘reasons’. There are countless such reasons. All seem to be mutable. The individual finds some in himself. The universe of response tenders many reasons—to be established, recognized, transmitted, contested, unmasked as semblance, defended, justified, and revised. Every society formulates and identifies such reasons in terms of the conditions of its life, of the image of the world it builds. Although the society may enjoy semblances or even prefer the semblance that is visible to any truth that remains hidden, it demands from all semblance that it have the power to seem to be true.

Looking at the reasons as they compete in society and



change in history, we are tempted to assume that they are arbitrary norms of mutable society. The universe of response decides their validity. Pride may still try to justify them. There is no longer truth or semblance in the reasons themselves. The reasons the society recognizes are the true reasons.

Yet things are not quite so simple. In the background there is still an equivalent of some bear and thus a truth in some reason that does not depend upon the society. Adam still knows in a corner of his soul whether he really slew the bear and whether it was a difficult and meritorious feat.

A shoemaker is proud of his shoes, both toward himself and toward other shoemakers. He gets from society his notion of a fashionable shape for shoes, though not the distinction between honest and accurate or good and bad work. Nor does the society learn this distinction from the shoemaker. Both the shoemaker and society get it from the thing itself—despite all talk.

The artist has the measure of good and bad in his own soul. Though he may pretend to serve a god, king, city, or society, he is guided by an image. However great his pride, the greater his passion, the deeper his humility. Only rarely does his work come up to the image in his soul. When his work approaches that image, he may in humility feel he is a mere tool of something greater than himself. Like everyone else he is both *creator* and *creatum*. His lot is a greater than usual tension between pride and humility.

Cézanne painted his pictures with deep humility toward his sacred art. Yet he said that nature proffers uncertain, flickering phenomena—she is a creation in labor “until the artist, her redeemer, gives her an ultimate and eternal form. I shall be her Olympus, her god.”<sup>32</sup> So high a pride can be paired with so deep a humility. Though Cézanne disregarded the opinion of others, he was not vain. Year after year he took his paintings home after they had been refused by the Salon. Humble toward art, he was proud of his own truth and contemptuous of the semblance admired by his society. Sometimes, however, the pride of the shoemaker or artist, though asserted



against the society, is merely an illusion of the individual—his work is not really good.

Imaginary and true reasons for vanity spring from the soul of man in his struggle with things, men, and gods, even with society. When these reasons are valid, pride remains surrounded by humility, conscious of man's limitations.

But few men are content to be proud of themselves in their own eyes, even if sure their reasons are valid. Society has to acknowledge these reasons and pay them the honor they deserve. They want resonance. Society as universe of response sets up reasons for pride and ties them to the whole of its order. It tries to pass them on to later generations, though it cannot help modifying its bequest. Every individual is born amid such inherited reasons. In setting up these reasons society yields to interests and power. The reasons change. They may correspond more or less, though never exactly, to the reasons of the human heart. They too may be true or specious. Official art, even when highly honored, is not always art. Hence, the reasons set up by society may be more or less supported by the things themselves whose requirements, however ambiguous, contested, intangible, are silently present. Happy are the times when the reasons in the hearts of men are the reasons society recognizes, the reasons of society the reasons inherent in the things themselves. But such times are both brief and rare—fortunate moments of a narrow society.

Such coincidence is always longed for. The individual, the smaller We in a wider We, seeks recognition of his reasons; the society tries to implant it in the individual soul. To be at least the semblance of a kind of truth, all semblance of all reasons must forever search for a reference to a reality.

Social position itself, the 'status' recognized by society, becomes reason for pride and eventually forgets the reasons for which it was, rightly or wrongly, awarded. Man tries to raise himself above others. Society, stratified by ranks and dignities, entitles him to look down upon those below and obliges him to bow to those above him. The stratification is stabilized. Pride becomes social pride. Social pride, with no reasons other



than social status, becomes arrogance of man toward man. The already confused accounts of pride, vanity, modesty, arrogance, semblance, and truth are snarled beyond any possibility of unsnarling.

The social position, acquired by virtue of some real or imaginary, bygone or present bear or its equivalent, pretends to be itself the bear. Was it not difficult and troublesome to get? Is it not a good? Everything depends upon it—influence, renown, all the small things that day by day feed or hurt the vanity of the vain and the pride of the proud. The social position itself, even when springing from semblance, is not semblance; it is itself the reality, more real than any bear. Hence pride finally forgets its first sense, merit, and its second sense, demand, the image that commands. Yet, even social status must still be referred to a real or alleged bear, 'merit', and any alleged bear must at least try to seem to be a real bear.

When an inherited stratification loosens and the yardsticks of merit begin to wobble, some societies present the queer spectacle of incompatible reasons, competing for recognition. This competition interknits four contests. First, the struggle for social status—the restive climbing of men asserting themselves against one another and coveting status. Sometimes it seems as if this struggle filled the entire stage of the human theater. Then not only moral virtue but also some vices seem to be "begotten on vanity by pride".<sup>33</sup> The deed is done, the job aspired to, riches acquired for social position, not for their own sake.

Within this contest for social status as reason for pride is a second contest, between the old and some new reasons for which social status will be granted. These reasons are at odds with one another. Even in a society rigidly stratified and with firmly established reasons for pride, this contest never ceases entirely. Even in a stabilized society some reasons for pride remain contested or contestable. Though lords and commoners may not compete, lord competes with lord, commoner with commoner, reason with reason. In this contest there is continuous reference to equivalents of an allegedly bigger bear. Within each of these two contests truth and



semblance compete in a third and fourth contest. In social climbing social positions can be faked more or less successfully, even in a society with rigid strata. Also in the contest of the diverse kinds of merit, which try to pass for reasons of pride, the truth of one reason struggles with the truth of another, the semblance of one with the semblance of another, and truth with semblance. When a society and its values are changing, new reasons contend with old; truth is not always and not necessarily on the side of the new. Old and inherited reasons succeed more easily in seeming to be reasons; they are not thought to need justification, whereas it takes effort to prove that the new reasons are not semblance.

In this fourfold contest he who puts his heart into social climbing has his work cut out for him. He must really acquire the wealth on which social status depends or at least make believe he possesses it. Then he must make his wealth or its semblance known or evident. Moreover, he must do what he can lest wealth lag behind in the confused contest of reasons; he will try to call in other reasons, concealing how he acquired his riches, to become related to those of noble birth, to lure to his dinner table the impoverished owners of real or fake titles, to buy relationship to throne, church, or power, or to court even art and wit—and in all this take care that he gets publicity lest his reality or his semblance remain unknown.

Society decides the results of this contest. But its decisions do not last; they are continually being revised. Its decisions are decisions about the present validity of reasons, not about their truth or semblance. In some cases posterity decides. But even posterity can err. The sole judge who seems to remain is the judge in the individual soul. He too is unsure, corruptible, easily seducible, susceptible to intimidation, and cannot read the law. Hence he is usually forgotten. This, however, does not mean that unsuccessful truth becomes semblance, successful semblance becomes the truth of the reality itself.

Organized power and interest interfere in the decisions of society. They support the reasons for pride and humility that serve their purposes, exploit, feed, cultivate vanities and defend useful pride against individual obstinacy or social tradi-



tion. We laugh at the spectacle when it is performed in the costumes of an alien society and take it for granted when performed in our own clothes.

The stronger subdues the pride of the weaker and sets up his own favor and nearness to himself as grounds for pride. He makes an alliance with vanity. Man's vanity and delight in semblance become an instrument of power. Power invents, develops, and offers society new possibilities of semblance. Human beings, bedecked with orders, ribbons, titles, in privileged hats, gowns, and hoods, ranked by dignity, gather in the anterooms of kings and high priests, in the salons of ministers, or at public meetings, and pay for the right of conceit toward inferiors, the duty of modesty toward superiors. Power loves vanity and mistrusts pride. The pride of the proud may turn against power. Hence powerholders tend to reserve pride to themselves. Thereby they cannot help discovering from time to time that to remain powerful, power needs merit, ready to serve. Someone has to slay the real bears. Then power must go beyond the organized vanities around its throne, search out true merit, and recognize reasons for a new pride. The dominating vanities ever again have to regild their semblances and for the sake of their power nail down some truth that is not merely semblance. In its own interest power must mix some competition of truth into the competition of semblances.

What gives social ambition so great a power over the souls of men and women? What is the sweet happiness human beings covet and enjoy? Is it delight in the game itself? Or only that social status, like money and power, is means to any and every desirable end and therefore desirable as means?

Man builds a world, a whole in which he is part. This whole comes to be as a *mundus hominum* which interprets the *mundus rerum*. Recognition and resonance, man's position in society is his place in the world. Our world pretends to be the world. Hence man's position in society comes to determine what he is and thinks he is to himself, to any potential You, to any one of the small We's, to 'them', the nameless others—a somebody or a nobody, as I, You, He, or She, part of a We and one of them whose voice carries weight. As society



changes, its capacity to be the world changes. It becomes manifest that society is not the world and may not be even ours. An I and a You, starting the game anew, build a small world within their wider world, a transitory beginning of a new society, perhaps soon submerged. Or the solitary man, renouncing society, flees into the wilderness, converses with his self, with his animals or the souls of his dead friends, and tries to divine from rustling trees the answers of his gods. As citizen of a *civitas Dei*, as You of a loving God, the Christian forswears the social ambition of human society.

In all its permutations the play of pride and humility, vanity and conceit, shows us eternal man as I of a You, as a He in a We facing a They, behaving toward himself and an image of himself in his own and others' eyes, and in all this inbetween truth and semblance. Countless variables scoff at any order. Yet the fundamental rules remain the same.

By virtue of a knowledge, however vague, of these fundamental rules we compare the mutable societies—the play of pride and humility, though the same, is unique in each concrete case. Here too the objective things are what they are by virtue of the roles they play. Whoever ties pride and humility to their objects will hardly find these fundamental rules.

Man's ambition is greater; he longs for glory. The We, be it a family, clan, or nation, is too narrow; his life too brief. His glory should finally embrace the world, reach friend and foe in the remotest hamlet, and be remembered until the end of time.

Man, who as I the determiner must die, will outlive himself as He, the being that in this determining has been determined. Men around the earth should retain what He said, thought, did, his image, the unique form he once was. As the dead cannot enjoy their glory, countless books denounce the vanity of the desire for glory. They too are inspired by desire for glory, says Cicero. Not all desire for glory is merely desire for glory. The philosopher who boasts of having laid his hands on the



millennium, the Assyrian kings who had their deeds carved in mountain rock, wanted their work to determine the future.

Real glory is social position in an eternal society of the truly great. The man who covets glory imagines that this society is ordered in ranks of greatness. To it he wants to belong. There semblance has little chance, despite the ambiguity of real greatness and the uncertainty of all criteria. Semblance may achieve a transient membership in that society for a few decades, never a permanent one. The long run is merciless. Many a great man remains unknown and gets no seat. No little man keeps his. The few whose seats are secure have really slain a big bear.

Here two things are worth thinking about. First, seats at the table of the really great are not given to those who desired them for glory's sake. Some men got seats who in their devotion to their work did not think of glory. Passionate dedication to something great achieves without ambition what the greatest ambition could not even dream of.

Second, there really is such greatness and such a society of the very great, despite all present-day talk.

This sketch of man's pride and humility is silent about the pride and humility of man as man. Man, proud of his superiority, elevates himself above all animals and plants, boasting of his might and splendor. The same man, aware of his futile inanity, humbles himself before his god and envies the dumb, innocent, self-sure animal. He always measures himself by animals and gods. In the exuberance of his pride he never gets entirely rid of all humility or of all pride even when overpowered by humility. However mutable society may change the moral valuations of pride and humility, the eternal 'sin' of man toward his humanity is pride without humility, humility without pride.



## Chapter 8

# SHAME AND AWE

MAN FEELS SHAME toward himself and toward others for an act, a sentiment, a failure.<sup>31</sup> He can feel shame for others—his friends, his children, his group, even for strangers—who are put to shame in his presence. He imagines himself in their situation and feels their shame. As we feel shame toward ourselves and toward others, for ourselves and for others, shame interrelates in manifold ways our relations to others with our relation to ourselves.

Shame is usually thought of as a phenomenon of mutable society, not of immutable man. Interest quickly turns from shame as a human attitude to the diverse objects of or reasons for shame. Each society sets up a system of *pudenda* and *veneranda* on the basis of its interests, conditions, ideas, tries to maintain and transmit it, and reluctantly modifies it as its things change. But before man can submit to the *pudenda* and *veneranda* of his society, he must be capable of shame and awe. Shame and awe too originate in the fundamental context of human life, which is prior to any particular society and its norms.

Shame is a tender thing. Words must be used with caution. Both the German and the English words derive, together with the German *Hemd* and the French *chemise*, from a Gothic



word, *skama*, meaning to cover, to hide. French and Greek have two words: *pudeur* and *honte*, αἰδώς and αἰσχύτη. The two distinctions, however, are not parallel. *Pudeur* is shame felt before, and warning against, an action; *honte* is felt after an action. The old grammarians define αἰδώς as *pudor perfectus ex verecundia*, αἰσχύτη as *pudor perfectus ex turpitudine*.<sup>35</sup> Αἰδώς springs from awe, αἰσχύτη from dishonor. The matter itself justifies the use of one as well as the use of two words, the French distinction as well as the Greek. Each language is wise in its own way.

Man, as a being already made, in the making, and to be made, acts and is acted upon in something other than he himself. As a One and a whole referring himself to a whole in which he is, he remembers and expects—changing amid his changing things. Thus he behaves toward his past, his present, and his future, wittingly and unwittingly measuring each by the others, setting up images, however hazy, of something toward which he strives, groping his way. In the structure of this directed occurrence spring shame and awe, as well as pride and humility, from nature herself and of necessity. Man, though ever an individual, is a man among men. Behaving toward himself, he behaves toward others; behaving toward others, he behaves toward himself.

In this process of formation no phase is an end and whatever is presently formed is still to be formed. Such a being will feel an equivalent of shame and awe, provided it feels or thinks or is aware of itself as a unity and hence is able to refer its already formed reality to the reality that is being formed and is still to be formed. If we condescended to ascribe to animals and flowers such an awareness, we would have to concede to them too an equivalent of a kind of shame and awe.

Before an action that endangers the thing in the making, the bashful will timidly hesitate and resist—the case of *pudeur*; after an act that harms, hurts, or soils, shame will burn in memory—the case of *honte*. Hence shame will conceal an action done, protect the vulnerable, respect its secret, and



point beyond itself to awe. This holds not only for individuals but also for the group in whose name individuals feel shame.

The individual can feel shame as an individual toward himself as well as toward others. A man has done something mean—no one knows about it. He tries to forget; he remembers—shame burns again. If others know about it, even forgetting and interpreting away does not help him, as the knowledge of others fastens the mean thing to his image of himself. Despite this role of the others and their image shame is felt not only with respect to others who know or could know. No human being alone with himself is without any kind of shame. If a man seems to be without shame as an individual, it is because the greater part of all the *pudenda* imposed by society are respected and meant to be respected by the individual only with reference to a possible observer.

The system of *pudenda* and *veneranda* of a society, the many-layered order of norms, though apparently stabilized in more or less rigid habits, changes slowly but continuously, as the universe of mutual response forms and transforms it, resisting and yielding to the pressure of organized power and its interests.

The *pudenda* and *veneranda* of such systems are identified in terms of objective things and overt actions. In the change of things and conditions such formulations, transmitted from generation to generation, can outlive their meanings, and with their meanings their titles and reasons.

The *pudenda* and *veneranda* are intended to be coherent systems, though they are often mere aggregates of fragments of diverse traditions, transmitted as habits. Intended to be systems, they are forever in a process of formation, and of dissolution as well, since the single formulations, chained to their things, have a life of their own. This integration and disintegration however, should be thought of as occurring in different layers. Fundamental principles, mostly intangible and elusive, tenaciously clung to, may be maintained in the depths of a culture, while the more visible norms on the surface follow the change in conditions less reluctantly, though always limping behind.



Albeit each *pudendum* entails a *venerandum* and each *venerandum* a *pudendum*, the *pudenda* may lose their original *veneranda* and owe their authority to mere habit.

Every society sets up an image of man, clear or unclear, distinct or blurred. This image is formulated in theoretical terms. It is represented in remembered or idealized images of exemplary individuals who are revered as great. Usually a change in the guiding image of a society can be recognized only indirectly in the change of heroes, hero worship, and the mode of idealization. Apart from these guiding images a society sets up some negative images, images of human ways it disparages, detests, abhors. These negative images are usually more distinct than the positive; naturally so, since it is easier to make clear what man should not be. Yet even they indicate the positive, though only indirectly.

Moreover, in our fast-moving life under quickly changing conditions the official system of *pudenda* and *veneranda*, though still dominating the words, may no longer be the system that secretly guides actions and feelings. Some *pudenda* and *veneranda* in the mouths of parents may already ring hollow to their children; children may even be aware that the *pudenda* and *veneranda* of parental words are no longer those of parental actions; elders may complain about the shamelessness of youth, while youth, though shameless according to former yardsticks, are already unwittingly setting up new *pudenda* and *veneranda*. Thus the *pudenda* and *veneranda* on the lips of the old may no longer be in their hearts; those in their hearts may no longer be in the hearts of their children, and those in the hearts of their children may not yet have found their words.

It may seem that the individual gets his *veneranda* and *pudenda* from society. Fathers, mothers, and teachers, we are told, transmit social norms to children and form habits by punishment and reward. The matter, however, is not quite so simple.

Even if man got the objects of shame and awe from society, shame and awe themselves are not the product of society. They reside as possibilities of man in the individual soul.



Only so can they receive their objects from society. Society gets these objects it imposes on the individual from the mutual responses of individuals as men converse with one another with respect to thing and world. In this process of spontaneous life, powerholders of all kinds interfere. To them the shame and awe of others may be merely instrumentalities of their power to ends which may be without shame or awe. Moreover, the *pudenda* and *veneranda* set up by society are never more than a wider or narrower frame within which the individual develops its own slender shame or awe—dependent upon society yet deviating a little, shifting the emphasis, favoring one of the still open alternatives against others. By virtue of such individual variations and their interaction the rather rigid *pudenda* and *veneranda* of society undergo a slow change. Hence the self-willed individual, no matter how weak and uncertain, cannot be interpreted away in any society, however streamlined. Even the absolute powerholder cannot eliminate the individual factor.

Before the observer who compares societies and cultures turns to the unlimited variety of objects of shame and awe, he should fathom the unity of the function of shame and awe in the life of man. Starting from this function he may inquire into the relations of men to their *pudenda* and *veneranda*, into their structure as systems of norms or aggregates of habits, into their stratification, into the range of alternatives they allow, the force of positive and negative images, the tension between words and deeds—structural differences that remain comparable though the objects of shame and awe may be totally different. Similarities of that kind bring dissimilar systems of *pudenda* and *veneranda* into close kinship, whereas dissimilarities of that kind within the same system separate the concrete life of one period from that of another more than mere differences in objects of shame and awe.

The peculiarity of our own system of *pudenda* and *veneranda* or of the aggregate of fragments we have inherited is the reason that to us the inner connection between shame and awe is far from obvious. Hence the unity of the Greek *aidos* seems



to us a trait peculiar to a bygone culture. Our own peculiarity, however, may distort our perspective.

In thinking about man, nature, and the universe we anticipate a knowledge we do not possess. We believe we have explained a great deal and are able to explain everything, and have little respect for the secret. But it is respect for the secret that binds together shame and awe.

When talking about shame, we think first of sex. Yet sex is but a small part of shame. The sexual is a *pudendum* to us; this *pudendum* has lost its *venerandum*. We slander the animal and remain animals. Hence we find it difficult to understand the role of shame in sexual love. This role is manifold. Shame demands that we conceal sexual acts. They belong to the I and his You and are their secret. The observer or he who permits observing is shameless. Words, though only words, are felt to be more shameless than actions. Herein too shame defends the secret. Many a society the Puritan calls shameless enjoys frivolous talk yet demands the veil of some wit and charm. In matters of sex most societies demand modesty in youth. Shame protects the growth of puberty. Sex is man's most vulnerable spot, exposed to the most vehement of all desire.

Shame has to do not only with desire. Desire without love is resisted by shame. Love yielding to love does not feel shame. Shame protects love against desire without love. This is not a man-made norm, a means of society for one of its deliberate purposes. Though such purposes may interfere a great deal in the development of sexual taboos, the protection of love against desire is the interest of nature in society. When sexual intercourse is merely the satisfaction of a sexual urge, shame insists upon the co-presence of its lack. Without love the partner becomes an observer. The more mutual the love the less it knows either shame or shamelessness. Shame, receding from growing love, returns when love fades.

It may not be right to say that shame recedes in passionate love. It may merely modify its code. What would be shameless without love is no longer shameless. Love develops its own code to protect the You against the I, the I against the You, perhaps even the We against the I and the You. This code,



lovers' tact, is a delicate, intangible thing—it defends the secret of the I, the You, and the We, and is nature's order, not norm of a society.

I am aware of the countless variations in which man's love for man moves back and forth in manifold ways between coarseness and gentleness. The difference, however great, should not prevent us from hearing a melody that even in its crudest variations remains faintly recognizable as the same. Whereas the formulated and manifest norms of human behavior change from society to society and from one phase of the life of a society to another together with the conditions and material circumstances by means of which they are identified, some rules of human tact, mostly unformulated, persist through all changes and differences, though different societies and periods put more or less stress on their being respected. Some of these rules originate in the nature of the relations of man to man. Two concern shame and awe.

Passionate hate, no less ingenious than love, knows how to hurt deeply: it uncovers the most vulnerable spot and exposes the hated man to shame before himself and before others, soils and tears down whatever he reveres. It destroys man's relation to himself and to his image.

Tact, solicitous about the possibility of friendly relations between men, requires two things in every society, high or low, civilized or primitive: never put to shame and never violate a hidden reverence. The tactful man divines the vulnerability of the other and spares it.

Nonetheless, is there not an absolutely shameless man, devoid of any awe? If there is, shame and awe will owe not merely their objects but their very existence to society, and be imposed on man, bred by society, sustained by the interests of powerholders and priests.

Here, however, we early fall victim to an optical illusion. We call him who disregards or disparages our *pudenda* and *veneranda* shameless. Yet he may have his own though not know them. We could discover equivalents of shame and awe in the rebel against society and its code, sometimes even in



criminals, if we did not chain shame and awe to our own *pudenda* and *veneranda*.

Despite all that, human beings can be absolutely shameless. He who is without any shame is without any awe. Who is this man? A man in want and fear forgets such a gentle thing as shame or awe. The absolute hardness of great sorrow and its coldness no longer knows of anything in man that could be vulnerable and in need of protection. Man, thing, world, and whatever is real is naked and bare, without any secret. All shame and awe become illusion. Without shame or awe is power, when it is nothing but power. The monopoly of power as a rational purpose, respecting only itself and its interests, has no room for shame or awe. In the master they are hindrance; in the serf, means to power.

Also without shame and awe is a kind of radical enlightenment, as in theory it denies any secret. Without shame and awe, even scornful and bitter against them, is he who has lost himself in spite and revolt, aware of a final failure. But his testimony carries no weight. He testifies against himself.

Shame and awe, as notions in man's reflections about himself, seem to be social phenomena. Inferences from words to the reality of the things they designate are dubious. Shame and awe are real even when they are not thought about and designated by words.

The shameless and aweless may learn tomorrow to know the shame and awe they deny today. Priests did not invent awe. Awe invented priests before priests brought under their power the objects of awe, their manipulation and administration.

Shame and awe are nature. The process of formation, transformation, deformation, conscious or unconsciousness of itself, which we call the life of man, needs and generates them. Shame protects, awe guides, the formation. Man, the little *creator* and the poor *creatum*, dependent and in danger, moving in a fog, easily goes astray. The yeses and noes he sets for himself are uncertain and waver. A finite being, he limps behind and runs ahead of himself, now restrained, now break-



ing loose inbetween shame and awe. An infinite being knows neither shame nor awe.

Shame and awe guard the vulnerable. But they themselves are vulnerable and need protection. Hence, again and again, shame and awe are trampled to death by violence, cupidity, and want—yet close by the tender plant sprouts anew.



## PART FIVE

### *Misery and Happiness*

*The various passions, emotions, sentiments, moods, attitudes, have a common origin—the unity of the fundamental context of life. They are movements of the soul. In his passions man desires, protects himself, yields, resists, and conceals. They are not only passive, pathemata, overpowering man. Even when they seem to be mere pathemata, they are active impulses. Man, in, through, and behind his passions, is directed toward something, acting and being acted upon. As situations, events, requirements, impulses, are confused, pity and hate, love and pride, care and exuberance—all the passions—contend with one another. Fear restrains desire, pride conquers fear, admiration envy, love pride. The contenders coil—feelings tangle queerly in the soul of man.*

*In need and desire man clings to the single thing, learns to know its power and makes demands. One single thing vies with another. Diverse are man's needs and desires. Yet the same man behaves—and not only by virtue of this or that particular need or desire—as a 'whole' toward the 'whole' of a world in which he feels himself part, or of the life he lives—in diverse ways and different meanings of 'whole'.*

*Possible discords and conflicts of parts or partial impulses with one another and this 'whole' of divers meanings are the*



lot of man, inherent in the fundamental situation of finite man in a world of things and men. Amid much strife man gropes his way, now unsure, now sure, resisting and overcoming resistance, yielding, evading, and returning, searching for something in both his acting and resisting, believing either that he is led by an unknown force in himself or leads himself, and when lacking any such guidance, painfully aware of its lack. Since the beginning of time, men have disputed about the what and the whither of such guidance.

Faculty-psychology lists feeling, desiring, willing, and thinking as faculties of men. Philosophers credit reason with guiding man. Since reason, in thinking, remembering, and expecting, can make the absent present, it is entrusted with the task of helping the 'ought' to rule the 'is'. But the distinction between partial and total does not correspond to the distinction between passion and reason. It cuts through the division of faculties; within feeling as well as within thought the partial and the total grapple with each other. The faculties cannot be separated as if they were different entities. Man feels and thinks as a being that perceives. He thinks as a being that feels.

Whereas a venerable tradition treats the passions as pathemata and charges the 'logos' of man with their central guidance, control, or domestication, a more recent psychology sees in the human soul a battlefield of drives, instincts, impulses, or emotions, and lets the stronger feelings conquer the weaker. But it infers the strength of an emotion from such conquest. It entrusts to so-called reason the modest task of rationalizing the victorious emotions, a task for which reason is especially suited. Frau Klüglin, die kluge Hur, Martin Luther calls reason.

Both psychologies lead nowhere. The former restricts 'passion' to those violent movements of the soul that overpower 'reason' and keeps silent about those that guide reason. The latter, which does not acknowledge anything wholelike or any inner guidance, does not explain why man tends to rationalize the decisions of the victorious emotions, nor does it think about what 'rationalization' implies. Yet the syllogisms



of the modern seducer of masses slip an alleged fact as minor premise inbetween the major premise of an apparent general rule and a conclusion—the emotion to be evoked. Rationalization searches for a general rule which is supposed to link the part to a whole and thus justify the claim of the part.

The *whither* of guidance is no less doubtful than the *what*. Some psychologists, attempting to bring a kind of order into the numerous drives, instincts, impulses, or motives, construct a fundamental drive: self-preservation, libido, will to power, vanity, security, fear of death. Some of these terms impoverish the variety; others lose the distinctness of their meaning in trying to encompass the diversity. With the help of the category 'means and ends' the one or the other drive is proclaimed to be the end to which the others are means. But each is end and each is means. The diversity is not a mask for the one drive that is 'fundamental'. Hence the drives remain numerous. Others, more cautious and modest, are content with the best possible adjustment of man to his environment or with the most effective relationship between man and the forces of his environment—returning to that poorest of models.

In this model too life is directed toward a definite kind of relation between man and environment, be it called good adjustment or effective relationship. To nothing that lives is the *how* of life irrelevant. Life is directed toward *what*? Toward a gleam of happiness away from the many kinds of misery. This answer, if it is an answer, raises a question.

Misery and happiness are names of different *how's* of life, the one we avoid, the other we seek. But *what* are they? Giving them different names does not help.

Life is 'occurrence'. That toward which it is directed is not product; it too is 'process', a definite mode of occurring. Health, for instance, is a definite mode of occurring, undisturbed, power to resist disturbance, to restore the process—one and the same health in plant, animal, and man.

If health is the happiness of bodies, the bodies are not healthy by virtue of their happiness; they are happy by virtue of their health. But 'body' is an abstraction of the observer; health is here merely an example.



*Happiness and misery do not answer the 'whither'. They are not simple feelings, irreducible data. They put a question and hide the answer in the disorder of their variety.*

*Hence I go on to a new query: what in the mutable misery and happiness is that same reality to which the sameness of the words seems to point?*

*We speak of pleasure, joy, gaiety, happiness, of displeasure, pain, melancholy, sadness, grief, and misery. The fields of meaning, their cores, their shades, and penumbras flicker. But upon one distinction even loose usage insists in all languages.*

*Whereas we think of pleasure and displeasure as distinct feelings, be it of one of the senses or of the soul, tied up with a definite thing or event, we connect happiness and misery with a total state of a man in the totality of a definite situation.*

*The nature of the reality itself imposes this distinction on any language and sustains it in each throughout the centuries against the carelessness of human speech. To most men of our time everyday life—a sequence of changing sense perceptions, transient sentiments, moods, thoughts inbetween pleasure and pain, referred to, and dispersed among mutable things and events—seemed until recently by and large to mix a kind of cold comfort with pesky annoyances, as men are busily engrossed but only partly engaged in mutable things and events. Now and then only did a gleam of joy, the darkness of a sorrow, seize the entire man—for a while.*

*As happiness and misery get hold of total man the specificness of their causes recedes. Whatever the cause, one deeper misery would equal another, one deeper happiness another, if we were able to describe the sentiment itself, independent of its objects or conditions.*

*Happiness is not simply a larger quantity of pleasure, misery simply a larger quantity of pain. Pleasure and happiness, as well as pain and misery, are different in kind. The pleasures of our palate may claim some share in a feeling of happiness and be passed off as part of an answer to the why. But a premature answer to the why may block our view of the what, for which, in possession of an answer to the why, we*



*no longer search. Though the what of this feeling of happiness contains more than the physical pleasure lovers know, the quantity of sensuous pleasure and the happiness of their love are not identical. We should inquire into the what of happiness independently of the why.*

*In the philosophical tradition the question of the what of happiness is overshadowed by the question of the way of life by which we can hope for a lasting relative happiness. Happiness was happiness while it lasted. Yet the happiness of a contentment we can expect to last may have been purchased at a high price. I do not ask about the way of life that would give happiness its best chance of lasting, but about how happiness and pleasure, misery and pain, differ in kind—in the moment of their presence.*







## Chapter 1

# DESPAIR

I INQUIRE FIRST into the extreme of misery as a mode of man's being. What is it that in such misery happens to man?

Some languages denote it by a specific word—such words describe. The German *Verzweiflung* suggests that in this misery man is torn asunder by doubt; the utmost misery of the English and Latin peoples is lack of any hope; the Russian word *ottchaina* means originally the lack of anything man could at least wait for. But the different words do not designate different things; in utmost misery the human being whom doubts have torn asunder will be without hope; the human being who is without hope will not have anything he could at least doubt. The words say *partem pro toto*—each part indicates the same totality.

Radical and really total despair is rare. Perhaps it is a mere construction: the limit toward which all despair converges. Perhaps the living being cannot despair entirely as long as it lives. At any rate, men can endure immeasurable misery without despairing. Most despair they talk about is not yet despair—utmost misery.

Utmost misery has no limit. The darkness into which man stares has no boundary. In utmost misery any difference in



how or why this misery came to be disappears in the sameness of the what of despair. The what of despair has to be described in terms that do not depend upon mutable conditions, cultures, societies. The vigor of any such description is limited; it cannot reach the concrete fullness of the particular case. It can only help in spelling out the elements of despair.

The things of the man in despair are mute. They are no longer his things; they are not responded to and do not respond. The man in despair asks no questions and gets no answers. There is no desire, no delight, no grace. There is not even anything worth disgust. The man in despair does not care—his things go to pieces. Any relation to other men crumbles. Their questions, even their compassion, are painful. The man in despair is not a You to anyone, and no one is a You to him.

For him 'We' too is an empty word. It has no power of embrace. Despair isolates; he who despairs withdraws. The so-called primitive man takes to the woods; he thinks he is slain by a god and lets himself die ere his misery becomes despair. With the We the world vanishes. There is no longer any 'being-in' a whole. If there is still 'world', it is the world of the others. Only to the others does the light shine. No sky arches. If there were gods, they have fled. Ideas are empty.

There is no longer any image for the I to measure the Me by. He who despairs has ceased to love himself; a moment ago he still felt immeasurable pity for himself. Even hate keeps silent; the man in despair is not worth his own hate. He has neither pride nor humility. He does not speak. There would be no resonance; the void would swallow the meaningless words.

Job prays; he does not despair. We say a man 'gives way to despair'. He allows himself to sink. Now only is his despair despair.

Time too breaks asunder. Memory has no hold on expectation; expectation no hold on memory. The now comes from and goes to nowhere. Space is no longer man's space. The other things in space are no longer others-to-me. They are otherness, staring at me—strangers.



I give this description of the what of despair for the little it may be worth. The description is of the extreme case, the limit of utmost despair. The extreme case obliterates everything by which the living being is and lives. Being draws nigh to not-being. Lack alone with itself is hardly aware of what it lacks. Yet the man in total despair still lives. He still 'is' though only his own not-being; he lives not life but death; the absence is present until physical death negates even the privation.

We treat total despair as sickness, be it of the body or of the soul; the description seems to fit only the worst cases of 'depression'. The despair of the healthy may never reach utmost despair. That is why we call him healthy. But illness too is a possible mode of being.

Positing total despair as a limit toward which all partial despairs converge as they grow, we may be guided through the thicket of the endless diversity of partial despairs human beings fight as long as they live.



## *Chapter 2*

### THE KINDS OF MISERY

**M**AN'S MISERY is of many kinds. Man identifies their specificity by their immediate cause, real, alleged, or seeming. He describes the causes in terms of the infinite variety of mutable conditions, of the obstinate things, men, institutions, ideas. Man's misery is minced into an infinite multiplicity. Yet all these mutable factors are causes of misery only by virtue of the role they play in the unity of a context that is the life of man.

The words misery, grief, sorrow, pain, unhappiness, sadness, attempt to pin down mutable and wavering differences. Pain, be it of the soul or of the body, is pain of or for a this or that of a definite nature. Misery points to man's situation as a whole. Some pain remains only pain, some becomes misery. Between pain and misery, grief, sorrow, sadness, unhappiness, affliction, move in loose and changing usages of the words.

Misery—in the sense of a total situation—mingles its blackness in the last glimmer of a joy. But even misery remembers its specific source. Only despair forgets it. Resistless, it is not concerned with its origin.

Anyone who tried to order the boundless diversity of misery into classes and subclasses would not know where to



begin and end. The reality floods over all lines of demarcation. Each passion has its own misery—bitter is hope disappointed, pride humiliated, love unreturned, impotent hate and envy, burning shame, derided awe, and so forth endlessly. Yet none of these expressions reaches the concreteness of misery. The passions interact: pride, hate, love, shame, hope are never alone. The sweetness of one creeps into the bitterness of another, into the misery of a third. No classification of miseries according to man's passions masters the richness of the human heart. The passions classify at most the apparent causes of our misery.

Yet perhaps the eternal fabric of human life, articulated in relations to thing, man, and world, helps divide man's manifold miseries into a few main genera. There is man's relation to things: hunger, want, the dullness of labor, disgust, filth, the dumb, meaningless stone. There is man's relation to himself: the lost image, distrust and doubt, self-hate—the empty mask in the mirror. There is the relation of man to other men: loneliness, the lack of a You, of response, of care given and taken, the I chained to a You that is not a You, the lack of a We, the We in which I am no one's You and not a He. There is finally man's relation to the whole of the 'world': be it *mundus hominum* or *mundus rerum*, the broken cosmos, the confusion, the loss of any sense, the last god turning his back, the failure of his last substitute.

Though each misery of any kind can be subsumed under one of these genera, even this classification does not plumb the what of human misery. The genera too are merely classes of causes, real or alleged, of human misery. The what of the concrete case, that is, that which happens to the miserable man, does not respect the demarcation lines of the classes; it oversteps them and resists being described in terms of any one of these relations; peace with God can hardly be maintained unless man is at peace with himself. This discord invades man's relation to his things and his gods. The fabric is one; each of these relations is what it is in community with all the others.

If the subsumption of a misery under one of these classes



does not preclude its subsumption under another, the classification loses the better part of its meaning. The failure of all attempts at classification is no accident. The order in classes and subclasses presupposes a multiplicity of separate and separable entities. It has its place in the multiplicity of existing things and events, which at one moment or another become causes of misery. But we have to do with the inner articulation of the one context; within it its momenta or constituents are interlaced in countless mixtures and transitions. No rigid order of classes can master their diversity.

Starting from any cause or origin, grief or pain can spread over the totality of man's relations to man, thing, and world, and grow into misery. Life can cling to each of these relations, entrench itself there, and persuade pain and grief to become sadness rather than misery.

Hereby part fights forever with part for the whole; the whole with part in a variety of permutations without number or end. All languages reflect this complexity in the multitude of their words and their shades and lights. Grief should not become misery; as sorrow it is for a this or that dear to the heart until as sadness it covers all things with a grey veil. Melancholy has forgotten its origin and become an attitude toward man, thing, and world, pervading the whole, which is one.

However diverse man's sorrows, inbetween the violent and the delicate, the clear and the dim, inbetween burning and glowing, always unique and incomparable in the changing cloak of things and manners of speech, the dynamic of misery is forever the same. Everywhere and always the same are the ways of hurting, of tormenting, grieving, consoling, healing and forgetting.

The modern despot has developed to perfection age-old techniques of tormenting. Hence the misery of his victims is deeper. He is not content with torture and death; he wants to destroy man in his own eyes and in the eyes of others. The prisoner must betray his friends or, by confessing his guilt, testify for the cause he abhors. Scientific torture, based upon physiology and chemistry, breaks resistance. Life is



persecuted to the last hole; insult is added to injury; a last reverence is mocked; the illusion of a last hope to save parents, wife, children, is used to extort the mean act that destroys the last image. Now only is the miserable man, deprived of his martyrdom to his cause, allowed to die.

From the deep wound in the self, the loss of dear ones, the ruined homeland, or whatever else, how does man recover—if recover he does? By the same remedies: work and care, the tale of the cared-for things, the give-and-take by which things will become again our things; the new memory and the new expectation, the rediscovered sky behind the things, devotion, awe, an old or new allegiance, and finally the consolation of all consolations—the God, the great Other, as You. What is restored, in whatever historical cloak, is that unity of ‘occurring’ in which life is alive: the interaction of question and answer, the resonance in things and world, be it in any small corner, set off and protected against the confusion of the larger world, be it in the sanctity of an order that can pervade or embrace the small things around me. From each of the strands, woven together in the unity of its fabric, life begins again to restore the whole of its ‘occurrence’—the healing force of life itself in the miserable man, the power of care conversing with things and men, the helpful friend, the priest, prayer, or idea.

Therein, however, consolation, healing, and recovery can scarcely dispense with the aid of fake, semblance, and illusion. Hard and rigid are the things themselves and their truths. Flexible and subtle is semblance. In recovery life is grateful for its assistance. Hence the need for consolation inserts illusion into the history of truth. Since olden days, the major part of philosophy has sought to console, not to know.

As recovery restores the give and take of response to thing, man, and world, misery turns to grief, grief to sadness and melancholy. Man wants to forget and remains the serf of the unforgettable. Busy activity, leaving no time for remembering, may deafen; only new life forgets.

Expression of grief, lament in words or sounds has power to console. “*Gab mir ein Gott zu sagen was ich leide.*”<sup>1</sup>



Homer speaks of a longing for lament.<sup>2</sup> Lamentation, to enhance its consoling force, asks for the help of art: men sing mournful songs. We say: expression relieves. But what is expression? How can it alleviate? He who laments hears his lament. He hears himself, the I the Me. The subject as subject and the subject as object become two and help each other to bear. The air carries the sounds to the mute things, and the soul in need of response imagines the things mourn with man. Lament seeks resonance of things, of other men, of God.

Has lament in word and song really the power to transform the violence of grief into the calm of mourning or sadness if lament is nothing but lamenting, weeping and crying, and the shrieks of the miserable soul? We may doubt this power, but must admit it when lament becomes poetry and song. Hence the power of consolation is not in lament as such but in its form. What is that form? Here the words vainly court an intangible thing.

In the beginning of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, the unhappy duke orders the musicians to continue.

That strain again! It had a dying fall:  
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,  
That breathes upon a bank of violets,  
Stealing and giving odour.<sup>3</sup>

Is it because the movement of sounds, harmonies, and rhythm forces the movements of the soul into their form and makes grief part of a whole or *Gestalt*, and know itself as part instead of being alone with itself? Whatever the reason, a sweetness of grief mingles into the bitterness of pain.

Never in history has a people turned to its music with such fervor as the Germans in the misery of their bombed cities, sons who would never return, drowned hopes, and daily torment and shame. And they did it not merely to forget.

The poet of the *Iliad* lets Priam, Andromache, Hecabe, and Helena tell their grief for Hector. They do not belittle their sorrow; color, or mince; they do not try to console themselves. But the hearer of such lamenting cannot help



drawing conclusions from the movements in his own soul to the movements in the souls of the mourners who can so lament: such lamentation has healing power. It shows the griever the place of his grief in a wider context, be it the lot of mortal man or the whole of his own life. Thus grief belongs to the world, not to the griever soul alone. In music the human passions delight in themselves, in both their joy and their pain.

Aeschylus, in a lost tragedy, shows Niobe after the goddess' arrows have killed her seven daughters and seven sons. She utters no sound, sheds no tear. The action proceeds. Human beings nearer and nearer to Niobe's heart try harder and harder to break her silence. At last she begins to cry. We feel that life returns. But Niobe's grief is too great: the gods transform her into a rock.

These inadequate words do not pretend to explain lament's power to console. They suggest that the student of man ponder its secret. The question may not find an answer; it should not be shoved aside and forgotten.

Grief and consolation put the distinction between truth and semblance to a difficult test. Much torment is imaginary. But even when imaginary—like the Puritan's fear of Hell—it is real to the miserable as long as it lasts. That the devils do not 'exist' does not matter. Imagination can cure as well as cause misery. One illusion heals the other. Illusion heals even a reality. There is, however, a kind of deep misery that is absolutely sure of its truth and yields to no illusion. It is sharp-sighted and sees with cold, incorruptible eyes through any consolation. Everything freezes; the last warmth vanishes. All warmth is illusion; coldness alone is real. Sometimes even such coldness concerns not merely these or those men and things. Such misery, knowing too much, recognizes its origin in the eternal fabric of reality itself. Hence no ruse can deceive it. The great power alone can relieve such misery, not by any illusion he creates, but by his kind of truth—the image of a hidden order of necessity in which even this misery has its place.

Each age has its own unrepeatable misery. Since we can



describe its particularity only in terms of the conditions of the age, its things, its ideas and their stubbornness, the specificness of historical conditions enters any description. Yet it pervades the reality itself. Incomparable is the fear of Hell of the Puritan who is not of the elect—the grinning devils on the wall, the stench of vapors in his dreams. The unique nature of the Puritan's God interknits the relations of man, thing, society, and world, and hence the elements of misery in a unique manner. The elements remain the same. Even this misery does not break the iron frame; here too this specific God is what he is by virtue of the role he plays in man's being, albeit no other god has ever attempted or will ever attempt to play this role.

Today despair, together with Kierkegaard's anguish, has become the fashion among European intellectuals as a manifestation of European 'nihilism'. This current, be it of feeling or thought, began under tolerable, partly even comfortable, conditions. The despair of the philosophers of despair was still remote from the utmost limit of misery. Most of them played with the phantom of an extreme possibility.

This modern despair obeys the oldest rules. Its philosophic leaders are late-born Christians. Their spiritual ancestors, obeying the command of a transcendent God, have through centuries slandered the colorful things of this world, the innocent senses, body, and nature. The son lost the world. God abandons the grandson. What remains is the foolish demand that reality, nature, history, be 'justified'. Faith bred this need for justification and promised to satisfy it. The need outlived the faith. The uprooted heir, worldless and godless, despairs of the possibility of such justification, reflects on his despair, and in its light interprets the existence of man.

This interpretation of 'authentic' existence is presented to a society whose things are empty, whose meanings are arbitrary, whose ends are nothing but means, whose loyalties have become confused, dispersed, partial, and conditional. In this society human beings have become meaningless to themselves. The 'educated' classes are interested in everything and in nothing. Culture, civilization, nature, and life are talked



asunder. This unhappy consciousness discovers primordial anguish, 'the nothingness that benothings', and proclaims as truth of life the ardent readiness for death.

The new philosophy may enjoy its success for quite a while. Yet it will be pushed further, either into a convulsive effort of the voluntary blindness of a *credo quia incredibile*, of old or new, of God or blood or state, or into the myth of violence and destruction.

I dismiss misery and turn to happiness.



## Chapter 3

# PLEASURE AND HAPPINESS

THE MEANINGS and connotations of bliss, happiness, joy, gaiety, contentment, and pleasure flicker. No clear lines divide them. Yet in all languages the matter itself demands more than one word.

I do not hope that the foregoing articulation of misery will help to articulate happiness. For two reasons: Knowledge gained from the opposite has little power. The miserable looks at happiness as absence of his misery. The perspective of misery has inspired the most perverted images of happiness—mirages of desire and consolation. Moreover, my articulation of misery is not quite sure of itself. It itself needs support. Hence I ask the happy about their happiness—without squinting at the misery of the miserable. Epicurus defined *Hedone* as freedom from pain. Thus he exposed his school to the stoic criticism that with Epicurus a corpse would be happy. But to him, a very modest man, the negatively defined state of a life without pain seemed something rather positive, everything man needs—breathing fresh air, seeing the colorful things, conversing with friends. He defined white as absence of black because he could not say by virtue of what white is white.

In the history of philosophy and psychology the question of happiness has not been lucky. It became the servant of the



need to prove that a moral life is the happiest and hence the most reasonable, of the tendency to call happy only a state that could last, or of blurring the difference between happiness and pleasure, until finally even philosophers were foolish enough to disregard not only happiness but all qualitative differences of pleasure as well, and to look for nothing except the stupid quantity of pleasure in the hope of pulling the theory of motivation out of the mud onto an apparently passable road.

I put aside the pleasure-pain psychology and ask for that something by virtue of which all the diverse kinds of happiness can claim to be called happiness. What differentiates pleasure from happiness? What is it that must join pleasure if pleasure is to become happiness?

What I have to say lays no claim to being new or startling or ingenious. Everyone knows it or has known it at one time or another; it is so simple that it is readily forgotten.

Since we assign pleasure to the 'senses', happiness to the 'soul', I could ask why or how the pleasure of the senses becomes happiness of the soul. I could call pleasure happiness of the senses, or happiness pleasure of the soul. But that would not help. The quest for the difference between pleasure and happiness would develop into a quest for the relation between senses and soul and get lost in its maze.

Body and soul are not separable entities. Sensing, feeling, and thinking are not separable faculties. Happiness has to do with a totality; pleasure with something which, being not total, is a 'part'. Pleasure is the happiness of 'parts'; happiness, the pleasure of the 'whole'. The happiness of parts is not happiness; nor the pleasure of the whole merely pleasure. Pleasure becomes happiness, though remaining pleasure, when and as far as the part sets itself up as a whole or, spreading over the other parts, succeeds in embracing something that for the moment is the totality. Happiness becomes pleasure, though remaining happiness, when and as far as the relation of the whole man to the whole of his life or of his world permeates his relation to the parts.

Everyone knows that we can, on the one hand, feel physi-



cal pain—in a tooth or a wound—without feeling miserable, and on the other hand, feel very miserable indeed without bodily pain. Similarly, we can have pleasure without joy and without happiness, or feel general well-being as joy, even as happiness of the body, without being aware of any distinct feeling of pleasure of one of the senses. This simple experience indicates that the terms, whole and part, whatever their precise meaning, are not altogether external to the things themselves.

It is pleasant to stroke the fur of a cat or to smell flowers. Though no quantum of such and similar pleasures of the senses becomes happiness of the soul by mere repetition and accumulation, they may claim that they contribute to the happiness of the happy, who in the delight of their senses may become aware of the happiness of their souls. Pleasure, confirming happiness, shares in happiness. The soul is not hostile toward the senses; happiness looks at pleasure with friendly eyes, all arguments to the contrary notwithstanding.

Sensuous pleasures of this kind have the advantage of not being preceded by any want, need, or desire that entails pain. For this reason Plato treats them as pure, and therefore true, pleasures which are compatible with the good, that is, happy, life. Unfortunately, their contribution to happiness is small. Everyone knows or could easily convince himself that a great many things and conditions not easily identifiable must be given if the pleasure of our fingers in the fur of the cat or the pleasure of our nose in the fragrance of the flowers is to contribute to something men are willing to call happiness. These other things cannot be thought of without desire. Life cannot—Being itself lusts to be.

What these other things are we learn from other feelings of pleasure which are less pure but more intense. In eating and drinking the pleasure of our senses sometimes seems to graze the happiness of the soul. When and under what conditions?

A first answer suggests our hunger and thirst, the satisfied desire, the end of its pain, the revived spirits of life. Now a feeling of well-being pervades the entire man; things, other



men, the world suddenly look better. Everyone knows that; only a few are modest enough to call it happiness. This phenomenon is akin to the happiness one feels upon recovering from an illness. He who regains health is more aware of the happiness of health than the healthy. Aristotle argues this point against Plato. Plato says pleasure is 'becoming', not 'being'; restoration of a disturbed order, hence impure. Since it implies the pain of a disturbance, it is relative to this pain.<sup>4</sup> Aristotle objects: not all pleasure is of this kind. Pleasure is actually—*energeia*—not 'becoming'. In recovery man does not enjoy the becoming healthy of the diseased part, but the restored activity of the whole body.<sup>5</sup> This activity is pleasure. We may call the feeling of general well-being after the satisfaction of hunger happiness, if we compare it with the pangs of hunger. We do not call it happiness if we compare it with the fullness of a happy moment. It may have its share in this fullness, together with many other things.

Men have praised wine in countless songs as bringer of joy and chaser of sorrow. In wine, we say, men drown their grief. In many songs, however, wine needs women and song. No song praises the happiness of the solitary drinker. Hence it is hardly the wine alone, nor the slaking of thirst. It is rather that the tongue is set free, the soul released from fetters; past or future is glorified or forgotten; the present—be it only the illusion of an hour—is everything, self-sufficient. This intensity of the present is the work of wine. To be sure, pleasure of the palate, good wine, delight in this gift of God, and gratitude for it mix in the joy of talking, in song and love.

The simplest and the clearest example is the role of sensuous pleasure in the happiness of lovers. Lovers do not identify the pleasure of their senses with the happiness of their love. *Le plaisir* is not *le bonheur*, though lovers give the pleasure of their senses its due, and are not easily confounded by priests or philosophers. Nature proves herself ever again to be right against frowns. Sensuous pleasure may have, love does not have, a bad conscience. On the other hand, lovers know that pleasure is nothing but pleasure if love is wanting. It is not even joy. The sated becomes sad, retreats into the self; the



partner is indifferent. When there is love, nearness of the beloved body spells happiness, even in satiety.

Men talk a great deal of nonsense indeed about the union of souls in the union of bodies, and other things of that sort. Yet all the romantic illusions of these and other words testify that this happiness is more and knows it is more than pleasure, though it cannot say what it is.

In love—which is the I in the You, the You in the I—the You is this specific I as You, just this and absolutely no other being. In this having oneself in having the other, the so-called soul is body and the body soul, and the things around begin to speak, through Me to you, through You to Me. The presence only is present. It is self-sufficient and master of the past and the future for the sweet while of a transient delusion. There is method in the madness of lovers and truth in their deception, even if they know that the madness is madness and the illusion illusion.

In this madness lovers discover the what of happiness and do not doubt their knowledge, though afterwards they may find out that it is fragile and the nearer to deeper misery the deeper the happiness seemed to be.

Pleasure itself, to be complete as pleasure, must believe in love, mix the illusion of love even into desire. Think how artfully the little slut would have to act in order to sell to the libidinous male the pleasure of his senses in her body as happiness of his soul.

Wherever a religious or philosophical interpretation of life has succeeded in slandering the senses, the pleasures of love have ceased to spell happiness. If all gods turn away, the senses are dulled. It is as if man for his happiness needed a god who enjoys the pleasures of man.

Two other senses are bringers of happiness, the eye and the ear. Their relationship to the so-called soul, however, is different; from the beginning their pleasure is not pleasure of merely a single sense. The muses may have reasons for their interest solely in eye and ear, despite all the efforts of cooks and perfumers. However that may be, long is the road from



tirely different from touching, tasting, or smelling. It is as if eyes and ears suffice for themselves, whereas even the finest meal and the best wine need friends, women, songs, or their equivalents.

What is the happiness man owes to eye and ear? Pleasures of the eyes: manifold delight in the colorful things and their inexhaustible diversity, the sun glistening in the dew on the meadow, the grace of flowers, animals, and men, the clouds and their shadows, the ridge of the mountain, the calm of noon, the skyline of a city. . . . This is certainly not merely pleasure and not only of the eyes—all senses help the eyes.

The ears too have their pleasures—in the rustling of trees in a storm, in the singing of birds, in the humming and chirping and buzzing of countless insects, in the euphony of speech. We breathe the air; the sun warms, the shade cools us. That is not a sum of separate pleasures but joy of the senses in the variegated and moving things and perhaps not only joy of the senses but delight of life in the senses.

Now and then such joy may be or seem to be happiness, and claim it imparts something to the fullness of an instant. If 'happiness' is more than a loosely used word and intended to mean a specific reality, a great deal more is implied: the colorful things speak to us, and not merely about themselves. They tell us a tale of the world and of ourselves, though we may not be able to retell their tales. Their crudeness and gentleness, softness and hardness, their nearness and aloofness, do not belong to the single things; they are part of the order of all things, even of ourselves. Our confused and narrow soul widens, something that is hidden in ourselves comes to light as thought that is sentiment or sentiment that is thought, though this thought may not know or reflect upon itself as thought. In this case the delight of the senses in the colorful things is joy of the soul.

I am aware that this description is open to many objections. For two thousand years we have made an effort to talk senses, soul, and mind asunder. Never have they been as separated as in the consciousness of the scientific man of our day—to his own detriment.



A Chinese sage tells us of a man who from a bridge watches the play of the glistening fish in the water. "Look," he says to a friend, "at the joy of the fish!" "How do you recognize their joy?" the friend asks. "By my own joy in the fish," the sage replies. As a Chinese and a sage he adds no comment.

It is not only the joy of the fish, however, that he recognizes in his own joy in them; in the true or alleged joy of the fish he recognizes the joy of his own soul.

In ourselves we discover what we see; in what we see we discover ourselves.

The delight of man in things usually needs another and his participation in our joy. With and through one another men enjoy flowers and clouds. Ever again joy in things becomes joy in other men with respect to the things; joy in men becomes joy in things with respect to men. When such joy spreads over the 'whole' of the world or when, in the response of man to man and things, the horizon that encompasses the world becomes visible, the pleasure of the senses becomes joy and borders upon happiness of the soul.

As, however, the connotations of the different words change, everyone may use them as he pleases. The distinctions I suggest are in the matter itself, whatever words are used.

What is the specific happiness men owe to what they call art? I choose music as an example, since in music most men feel the specific character of this happiness and its secret more purely and with fewer admixtures than in other arts.

He who listens to perfect music enjoys the pleasure not merely of one of his senses. He is 'in' the music he hears—nowhere else. We say he is entirely or only ear—the world of things is remote, yet the whole cosmos of life is present in the order of the hurrying, hesitating sounds that chase and flee, disjoin and conjoin. Time, tamed, restrained, moving in its rhythms or against them, exuberant in the richness of its caprices, delights in the order it infringes upon or obeys. Memory and expectation hold hands. In the fullness of a greater now, past and future are sure of each other.

The wholeness of the whole is present in the part before



the last tone sounds. But while the hearer listens, the whole is not something that confronts him—it is in him. In this world of sounds his soul has become world—a cosmos of sounds. The soul hears the soul—it has itself, its own hesitation and hurry, its rebellion and its peace, its sadness and its gaiety interlaced in a distinct manner in which its fabric is sensuous form, necessary and universal, yet unique and unrepeatable. To the true listener such music is no longer pleasure of the senses; nor is it joy over this or that.

Men try in many ways to say something that cannot be said. The power of words is limited; they cannot show what this something is to those who do not know it; and all words are pale for those who know it.

There is piety in such listening—even of the impious. The arts grew in the shadow of the temples, but they outlived the gods.

Music is merely an example. If I put the movement of colors, lines, surfaces, light, and shadow in the place of the sounds that seek and evade one another I would have to say the same thing in a different language. Or I could substitute the composer for the listener: in him this happiness came to be in pain and strain, and ere it came to be, permeated all pain and strain to the degree in which the sounds or the lines or the colors begin to speak and promise to resound from a whole that is at once soul and world—even if it is merely a master's modest song or a picture of fruits and flowers.

While it is, this happiness is individual experience. He who listens and he who creates is alone—though the knowledge of the feeling of others enlivens the memory.

This happiness is not partial—relation of the ear as part of man to the sounds as part of reality. The whole man listens as a whole. There is no lack. The absent is not co-present as deficiency. The I does not think of itself as merely an I. It is itself its You and its We.

Only later, when the last sound has died away and man returns from the magic circle into the world of things and men do the sounds and the listening again seem a part—there is



again the otherness and its obstinacy, its confusion, and its manifold worries.

What is strangest, however, is that this specific happiness in no way depends upon whether the sounds, melodies, or rhythms are gay or sad. The specific beauty of art thrusts through the sad and gay, through the bitter and the sweet, ends their isolation, and reaches the whole within which the bitter is bitter and the sweet sweet. Hence this happiness is beyond all joy and all sorrow over a single this or that.



## *Chapter 4*

# JOY, HAPPINESS, AND THE ELATED MOMENT

PLEASURE OF THE SENSES, though not yet happiness, can become happiness, but not by an increase in quantity. It must be mixed with something. In this mixture sensuous pleasure is no longer separate or separable. As far as pleasure of the senses is alone, it is deficient. It demands happiness of the soul. But happiness of the soul too calls for and elicits sensuous pleasure: it opens eye and ear. The senses should confirm it. Even religions that disparage the senses let the angels in heaven sing.

From the qualitative difference between pleasure and happiness I turn to joy. Whereas even loose usage does not entirely blur the difference in kind between pleasure and happiness, joy moves freely inbetween pleasure and happiness.

Selecting a few widely different examples in which joy over something can grow into an elated moment's happiness, I begin with the joy of doing. Not all doing is joy. In empty work, in a man fettered to the dumb thing and its boredom there is misery, as well as in a man who goes through meaningless motions in order to forget or escape himself. What makes doing joy? There is first the kind of doing in which



man, conversing with the things, opens himself to the things, the things to himself. In a give and take, man's Yes to the obstinate nature of the thing elicits a Yes of the thing to his stubbornness. The 'thing' may be great or small, a thing, a human situation, a tool, a tissue, a 'problem', or the cincture of the Ephesian Diana.<sup>6</sup>

The joy of doing is said to increase with the resistance that is overcome, with the effort this resistance demands, with the richness of the thing, of the story it tells, of its references to other things, to other men, to society, to ideas or gods. Thereby the joy of doing points forward to joy in the work, by which the doing achieves its end; the joy in the work points back to the joy in the doing by which the work came to be. "Joy's soul lies in the doing";<sup>7</sup> yes, yet only in the work does doing forget its worries, the hardships, failures, and pains. Pride in the work becomes pride in the care and pain of working. The work is finished; here it stands, an objective reality, an *alterum* to the doer, a product of the hands of a man. Man measures himself, his Me, and his image by his work, his work by his image of himself. Joy in the work becomes joy of man in himself. In working man is no longer merely his own poor narrow 'self'. Sometimes man, outgrowing himself, leaves his own works behind himself as no longer his.

What makes an activity a success; what makes a success a source of joy? Something different in each age and society? Obviously. We identify success as success by means of the mutable things, conditions, and valuations of mutable societies. Yet in these differences something is hidden that remains the same: the human meaning of success or that by virtue of which success is success. Today some would probably call it the 'existential' meaning. It is not simply and always the mutable opinion of mutable societies.

Man achieves or fails to achieve the end he wills. Thus he measures his success by the relation between his achievement and his ends. But this measure is unreliable. The end he willed was not at all an end, the thing man really wanted to achieve. Man seldom knows what he 'really' wants. Thus men in their



successes stumble from disappointment to disappointment, though they may be quite satisfied with themselves in each success at the time.

This reference of 'success' to the intention of the doer is part of the joy of any success, regardless of the intention. If the opinion of others is the standard, society decides whether an activity is 'a success'. It is no longer the stubborn I satisfied with himself or his image of himself, but the I as You and He in a We—recognition is itself the success. Now the waters of a second source of joy mingle with the waters of the first source. As a You and a He in a We the I enjoys being an I.

Yet success in both the first and second sense does not together reach the happiness that is sure of itself in a moment of perfection without any reservation. Joy over mere opinion, be it that of the I or the others, about my doing or my work, would not stand on firm ground unless the doing or work were related to a 'res itself' (*die Sache selbst*), that is, a reality that deserves to be real for its own sake. If this relation is merely semblance, this semblance must have the power to seem to be truth. Mere paper glory, however much present-day man enjoys it, does not come anywhere near happiness. Happiness needs more: doing and work done for its own sake, devotion to a 'res itself'—the meaning of this 'res' in the whole of a world.

Pindar's songs praise the winners in the Olympic games, their families, the city, the country that bred them. What is this happiness? The doing itself, the contest, the victory in the presence of the many? The celebration at home, the pride of the city? Should we call it joy or happiness? But perhaps even all this is not enough. The poet's praise hangs more on winning a race or a wrestling contest. In the victory he praises, his songs link the past to the future, be it of the victor himself, of his family, of his city or country. In his praise the Hellenes perceive their cosmos of things, men, and gods as present in the youthful winner and the splendor of his victory against the dark ground of mortal life and its misery. Perhaps the joy of the victor needs the poet if it is to border upon happiness.



What is such a victory? A 'res itself' or almost a nothing, though the many did see it? There are other such 'res' which need no Pindar, no laurel wreath, no jubilant crowd. But they can do without the poet only because the 'res itself' contains all the references—to the country, the world, or the gods for the sake of which a horse race needs the poet.

To us, 'modern' men, the word success suggests success in business, politics, society: money, power, social status. He who attains one of these three is 'successful'. Yet these are not a 'res itself' though they may pretend to be. In themselves they are merely means, abstract means to something else, a still indefinite thing other than themselves. They are whatever we can and wish to do with their help. The joy they bring is not joy in money, power, status; it reaches beyond them to something that may follow them—future 'successful' activity. The business man measures last year's success by money—he is successful if he has earned more than in the preceding year or more than his competitors. He counts the money either for the sake of comparison or to carry out plans. Some idea of a 'res itself' may play a role, but this 'res' is neither the work already done nor the money to be acquired; it is something that either is or has the power to seem to be something other than money, power, or status. Since we are accustomed to look at every- and anything under the aspect of means and ends, and since our ends are mutable purposes, set by ourselves, and most of our purposes again only means, and since in the interaction of things everything becomes in turn means and end to everything, human beings deceive themselves thoroughly about their so-called motives and few know what in their busy doing they are really striving for. Thus power, social status, and money appear to be one another's ends, though each by itself is only means. Some strive for social status for the sake of money or power; others for power as a means to money; others for money as a means to social status or power. Each of the three means plays for the others the role of the 'res itself'.

But if the most real of all realities, my money and my power, is not a 'res itself', perhaps there is no 'res itself'.



The 'res itself', however, is not at all a 'res'. I tread on treacherous ground and may even be suspected of smuggling in—by the backdoor of the 'res itself' and without identification papers—the 'good itself' into this apparently premoral inquiry. But I am dealing with a slight and delicate difference—the difference between joy and happiness, a difference in kind, not in quantity. Some joy over a success is believed to be and is called happiness. Yet happiness, sure of its specificness, knows that it is not merely joy over a 'success'.

The I, approving deed and work, enjoys the Me. It enjoys the approval of others, which justifies its self-approval. Both the I and the others should be right. Not a few painters would forfeit all their glory and success if they, instead of Rembrandt, had painted Suzanna—and not for the sake of its glory. Deed and product should be something in themselves—a 'res itself' independent of any approval.

The soldier demands something to fight for beyond the soldier's joy in victory. He may not know what it is and cannot even always fool himself, though he wants to. When many soldiers feel vaguely that they are fighting on the wrong side, entire armies can go sadly from victory to victory.

In all such cases something is lacking, something whose semblance is needed—beyond self-approval, beyond the praise of others, beyond money and power as means. What is needed is a reference to a 'whole' that is or strives to come into being—a world in which we are, in which deed or product, reality or promise have a meaning and a place, or at least the power of seeming. By virtue of this reference only and never without it can joy over a success become happiness—for a moment's while, when the deed or the product reflect the rays of light from a piece of an ultimate horizon that embraces this whole. Not every such whole or horizon has such radiance; some are leaden and narrow, and have not even the power to seem what they are not.

The commander in chief in a battle, his joy in commanding, deciding, mastering, and conquering—does not the passionate action, as jubilant doing, touch the hem of the cloak



of happiness as it passes by? Plato and Aristotle do not care for this kind of happiness; nor do most other philosophers.

Let us imagine the happiness of a victorious general, compressed in the moment when Bonaparte's soldiers, hungry, badly equipped, in rags, shout their devotion to their young commander after his first victory. How much is conjoined in his joy—the splendor of acting, the first proof of his mastery, the end of a painful expectation and imposed silence, the triumphant soldiers; the presentiment of the joy of the country, of the astonishment of the foes who are still so sure of themselves; the ways that are now open to him, to his country; the foretaste of future victory, of future work to be done, of a world to be formed!

The movement of his soul binds together past and future, whence and whither. Past and future discover their meaning in each other—the future fulfills the past from which it comes. Yet he who acts remains the same and becomes what he already is. A past justified and a future anticipated grow into one. All the accidental and apparently meaningless things are forced to converge toward something that comes to be—this is the happiness of acting in which the *virtu* of the doer subdues the power and caprices of necessity and chance. Yet even this happiness does not come to be under a starless sky. To be, it needs the glimmer of some stars that know how to shine. Such doing is rare. Opposite this rare happiness of movement in action stand its manifold miseries. In these miseries the whence and the whither are incidental to each other. The acting man is acted upon—deed and doer lose each other. This happiness and this misery are happiness and misery for the same reasons around the earth and throughout the history of man.

Stillness too has its joys. And these joys too can border on happiness. Calm too can be full and rich.

It has its misery also—the misery of emptiness; its name is boredom. As it seems to be the absence of movement, man, to escape this misery, plunges into any movement for move-



ment's sake and may merely exchange the misery of restlessness for the misery of rest.

A man is alone with himself in a god's world—in the stillness of the night under the glimmering stars, or at noon when all nature breathes quietly, the branches of the trees do not move, the hills bear the ripening fields, or in the brown evening when only the bells of the returning cattle interrupt the silence. What in an elated moment suddenly overtakes the solitary being and makes it still? It matters little whether we speak of the senses or the soul, of pleasure or joy, of the presence of a god or of a union with nature, or in some other mysterious or romantic way. Man, though alone, needs no one and nothing. He is his own You and We and finds the answers to his questions in the silent things. The single thing is no longer a single thing. There is but the whole in the things and in the soul of man. Time itself stands still—for a moment. Space is full, the distant near. Being itself seems to be grateful to be. Inward is outward, outward inward. Soul and senses drink in the world—into the world the soul flows.

Men who know this joy do not forget the elated moment; they remember a felicity that for the moment rests in itself. They try to say it in different ways, according to the language of their age. The religious man understands it as a moment of exultation, speaks of purity, sanctity, grace, awe, and of a driving power in or over man and nature, of the epiphany of a god before whom the single things withdraw. No matter what language we use, the words never capture the elated moment, even when they are the words of our own age.

I endeavored to compress the happiness of stillness or of movement each into an elated moment. I may have trespassed on the boundaries of what an ordinary man should try to say, or perhaps could even pretend to feel. I may have said only what man in an ideal of an elated moment would like to feel; thinking of the felicity he covets, man eagerly transcends all reality.

In contrasting movement and rest and their elated moments, I did not intend to suggest that the elated moment of



movement does not imply the element of stillness, or the elated moment of stillness, the element of movement. Most human happiness enjoys movement and stillness with respect to each other.

What is it that in all ages makes the joy in the talk of friends touch happiness? The friends may talk about something great or apparently small. They need not talk about the idea of the good or the meaning of history. They may talk about the fish in the pond. In our talks the great things can become poor and the small fish rich. The friends themselves matter and the sparks that are enkindled and the rays of light in which man or thing shines up for a moment. It is certainly not agreement of opinions about this or that. The I and the You and the We are not blurred in one another. It is even important, and absolutely necessary, that the I as You remain or even become an I, a source of surprise, of ambushes, secrets, or reserves, and thus show itself as a self, the same in the hidden necessity of an inexhaustible nature of his own. That indeed needs a great deal: play and the hide and seek of play in seriousness, seriousness in play, the brief word and its many hints, wit, caprice, respect for the secret, reverence and a sky behind all that sense and nonsense—the sky of just these friends which may be the only thing on which they agree, the inner freedom and the little creator in the creature, the ridiculous in him and the serious.

The joy in the talk of friends is the joy of men in one another and in their otherness, and through this joy, joy of each in his own self, and in both, joy in the things and the world.

Yet this joy in the talk of friends would hardly be happiness without the friendship itself which silently is and comes to be behind the words and lets the one be in the other and both together with respect to each other in the whole of a world, which, though perhaps only the world of these friends, is rich enough to seem to be the world itself.

Men praise two other sources of happiness: power and devotion. Both words are ambiguous. Power is means to a still indefinite end; hence its joy can be joy in anything to which



it can be means: women and wine, honor, glory, and revenge, any activity, destructive or constructive, deed or work. This joy in power looks ahead to whatever power makes possible. Hence it plays in the variegated colors of all the pleasant things power can provide and is hardly fit for the role of a fundamental drive and ultimate motive. It owes the semblance of such a role to its indefiniteness. In the so-called will to power, many sources mix their waters, some of them murky. To the powerless only and for different reasons, the powerful seem happy. The power Nietzsche praises is the power of doing, overcoming resistance, conquering what is hardest to conquer.

Power as power for power's sake? Whose power? The I's as an I? Over what? Over men, those who for the time being live or the future men of a smaller or greater *We* that is or should come to be and its small or wide world? By virtue of what does this power become joy or source of happiness instead of worry, care, and sorrow? Is it not impotence as it faces at any moment a boundary it cannot cross and cannot say, as the powerless does, "if I only had the power"? Does the insatiability of this will to power not betray an inherent delusion? Internal and external power are insatiable—except for a short while of illusion, the I of the powerful will never be the real center or the true focus of the others over which he rules; never again will the serf cheat the master.

Power will break resistance, yet as it needs resistance to enjoy itself as power, it must search for, elicit, or create it. It wants the others to be serfs, yet it cannot enjoy their servility. If this were the entire story of power, power would hardly be joy, let alone happiness. But power is never only power; it is not separable from either its role as means for everything or the delight in doing as doing. From these two it borrows its joy.

This joy will never become happiness if there is nothing except the I of the powerful referring the others over whom he has power to his 'Me' and his Me to his I. The I as center? Certainly, yet as center of a whole which is not the I but a world of men and things; and this world must at least have



the force to seem to be 'world', greater than the I of the powerful—wider, richer, other than he himself. That means: the joy of power, if it is to become happiness, needs its apparent opposite, devotion—devotion in a specific sense.

The I of the powerful who refers everything to himself needs for his happiness the reference of himself and his power to a world that is or becomes or could be or become the world of the others; the powerful will refer the others he rules not merely to himself, to the powerful I, but to this other thing, this world, and through it to himself and through himself to it—the one in the other. In this attempt indeed the powerful may go devious ways of manifold delusions—he himself being now nothing, now everything, the 'res' he is devoted to now swallowing up his ego, now his ego swallowing up that 'res'. As far as his happiness goes beyond the multiple joys to which his power is means, it depends upon the nature of that 'res' to which he is devoted.

Such devotion alters the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. The ruler no longer refers the ruled to himself as others whose resistance must be broken, but to the 'res' of his devotion. If his devotion is more than semblance and empty word, power demands that the ruled, in devotion to this 'res', acknowledge the ruler and his power. This acknowledgment lets power as use of force grow into might without violence. All power that is acknowledged or seeks to be acknowledged has no interest in the servility of the serf—this would rob the acknowledgment of its value.

This is only one of the many paradoxes of the powerful who wants to be happy. In his devotion to a 'res' that is greater than he, the powerful becomes the serf of this 'res' and its nature. He must become legislator and *patere leges quas ipse tulisti*.

Despite all the pleasures and joys of power, unacknowledged power is by nature unhappy. Though in this dialectic of the human heart, the happiness of power, to be happiness, needs the devotion of the powerful to a 'res' greater than he; this happiness is not merely the happiness of devotion. Devo-



tion is referred to power, the 'res' to the I. This great 'res' is my 'res'.

From the joy in his power the ruler looks down at the ruled, at the misery of their servitude, or from the sorrow of his many cares, at their easy obedience without worries.

Is there not a happiness of devotion as devotion in which the individual I, freed from doubt and responsibility, drowns himself in the cause of his master? Look at the glassy eyes of the crowds who in the vast camp of a party meeting listen to the screeching leader and misleader of masses—these beings are enraptured, happy to be numbers, glad to obey; no longer I's, part of a We, protected. The 'res itself' may be or seem to be the 'fatherland' or the party and its promise; yet it is only he, the leader.

Helpless as an I, modern man yields to the temptation of this happiness and blindly follows into deepest misery a leader who sacrifices his people and country to himself.

Not only in the master but also in the serf do devotion and power play a queer play. By the strength of devotion the happiness of the apparent self-denial of the serf consists in having a share in the power of the powerful. The serf enjoys the power of the master as his own power and dreams the dream of its glamor—the moment of devotion.

The joy of the inventor or discoverer too is a mixture of many things—the joy in doing as doing, the joy of the I in the Me, in the approval of others, in the glory, in the discovered or invented thing as means to something else, in the power over nature—let all that be conceded and disregarded. What is the joy in the discovery as such—Newton's, Faraday's, Maxwell's?

The one thought weaves different threads into one tissue. It binds together apparently incompatible things. It brings remote things near. The many grows into a unity and remains many, though ordered in the unity of a rule. In most discovering, the joy in the promise exceeds the joy in the discovery itself. The anticipation intoxicates—the discovery promises to encompass the whole of 'nature'. Yet not always and not necessarily is the joy joy in the anticipation of a promise to



be fulfilled. One riddle is resolved, another riddle replaces it. Joy becomes astonishment, humility, and reverence for nature. Manifold and countless are the colorful things. The secret recedes. Joy becomes piety, facing the unexplorable.

Yet the joy of the modern student of nature has limits. He himself and his observation remain outside the nature he observes. The law he discovers tells him little or nothing about himself. Were my own nature nothing but that, I would never understand myself. The physicist cannot read man as one of the variations of this great and mysterious nature. The world the natural scientist believes he observes is not the world in which he lives. If it were, if he could assume it were, if he could at least hope to spell out the joy and grief of his heart in the letters of the nature of his science, his joy would be happiness. Kepler's joy over the harmony of the spheres was happiness—by virtue of an illusion. The philosopher in his elated moments dreams he embraces in one and the same vision—he calls it his 'system'—the eternal order of all things and the joy and pain of the human heart.

The religious man conceives of the elated moment in the notions of his religion.

Shining through the differences of habits, institutions, words, and gods, two things seem to be interwoven in the elated moment: the pure and the sublime. In his intercourse with things and men finite man is soiled. The sacred is pure. To the pure only does God appear.

He offers himself as a pure vessel waiting for the epiphany of a being greater than he, for the gift of God, for His grace, breath, image or word, for the holy madness, ecstacy, or new birth. Whatever the rites of purification or the historical images of the sublime, in the elated moment in which the sublime pervades the purified man, even the hackneyed God of habit can again become sacred—and an ultimate meaning of sacred, forever the same, become certitude of the soul, though transcending all thought and inaccessible to words.



## *Chapter 5*

# THE PERFECT EVENT

THROUGHOUT the boundless diversity, concealed in the restless change of things and men, a bare skeleton of happiness persists. Hence I venture to attempt to state in words that naked form by virtue of which all this diverse happiness is happiness. In this attempt, however, I cannot use the language of either science or common sense. In their stead I resort to the language of an inverted thinking, that is, of a philosophy that is concerned with the inner articulation of the human reality as prior to the order of the many things in space and time. This attempt will fail but the failure will help to identify a target other attempts may reach.

The bare skeleton of happiness is the skeleton of an 'occurrence'. I call it the perfect event.<sup>8</sup> To be uttered in words, it must be articulated in steps. Its 'perfection', however, is not a sum of the perfections of single steps. The steps reach perfection in and through one another.

Here is man, this man, a distinct being, I, a subject as a One; something else faces him. Only with respect to some otherness is he a 'this one', a distinct being. To be something definite, he cannot be a thousand other things. His determination as a this one determines the other things as being not this one. Whatever these other things, they are other than myself.



I can 'be' only by not being these other things. The negatio is determinatio, just as determinatio is negatio.

The other things are still indefinite, though they are other than myself. But though being indefinite, they are something, not nothing. Not without effort can the needy One maintain itself against the otherness of the indefinite others, against the fright and anguish of their indefiniteness.

On this dark ground the *Gestalt* of happiness comes to be. The One is no longer this one only, the otherness of the others no longer this otherness. The one and the other have become through and in each other a manifold One and a manifold Other.

The indefinite Otherness, pushed back to a remote boundary, is no longer the nameless otherness of fright and anxiety. Though still undetermined, it is posited as susceptible to determination—embraced in awe or defied in exuberance. In the first step of the 'perfect event' the things step forth from the night of indefinite otherness, shine up as my things, the things of my desire, need, and delight, and show me their colorful richness and grace—they are my others, a familiar this one, distinct and bright.

The first step, however rich and graceful my things, when isolated, may be pleasure, joy in manifold ways—it is not yet happiness. The things are others to me. Though supported by their distinctness, I am still only the One. The things are my others. I am not theirs.

In happiness as the perfect event the first step includes a second step—the step of the You. The You may be of whatever kind, provided it has the force to make me take the second step. It may be my friend, my wife, the You in myself, a god, or some of the things in my care. In this second step I, as the One, become the other to another of myself, a You to my You. The other is my other One; I, the one, am the other to this second one. The second step, by itself, though joy, is not yet happiness. In it a third step is taken. Again 'other' takes on a new meaning. Again the One changes. The 'We' is and is not another thing. I am in it as in a whole, together with the You or its equivalent. It is in both me and You. Hence it is



'other' in a different sense. In a certain way I myself am the We. The third step preserves the second—the You remains the other-to-me. The perfection of the third step entails a fourth—the things that in the first step were only my things are now your things too; they are our things. They speak the same language—through me they speak to You, through You to me. They glisten in the sun—ours is the sun. Behind them is the sky. Now the otherness of my things has become another otherness. The loud or silent talk in which the I and You enrich the colorful things, the things enrich the You, reverberates from the sky—and its echo is re-echoed by the I, the You, and the things. The circle closes. The perfect event is sufficient unto itself. Time is present—a now in its fullness—for the moment of perfection. The construct of an elated moment compresses in one single instant the four steps. If there is no such single moment and the different steps are thought to occur in reality as different joys of different moments, this conception, though conforming to our intellectual habits, does not cover the reality of the human heart. Any analysis of what really happens in any of these steps the intellect isolates will discover in each of the four the silent or disguised presence of the other three—in memory and expectation or in desire and need, or in other ways in which the absent can be present in the queer logic of the human heart.

The 'perfect event' is an ideal construct. Only rarely or perhaps never entirely does man's happiness hit so high a mark. Yet all man's happiness stands against the background, near or remote, of possible misery. It even needs the possibility of misery. The possibility of the highest moment and the possibility of deepest misery imply each other.

The bare context of life articulates possibilities. Within its frame history determines the changing actualities.



## PART SIX

### *Man in Science and History*







## *Chapter 1*

# MAN AND SCIENCE

**T**HE SOCIAL SCIENCES search for laws that are immutable; even history, though modestly claiming merely to describe historical periods, has to do in its own way with something that is more or less immutable in mutable man.

The science of man today defines science by the scientific method. In the foregoing reflections about man, the 'scientific method' and its applicability to man is scarcely mentioned. They are prescientific and do not pretend to be more.

Yet before applying the scientific method, even the 'scientific' science of man urgently needs to think about the nature of its subject matter in order to ask the right questions and to interpret the apparent answers. The results of this science of man are meager. Sooner or later people will inquire whether such meagerness is really due merely to the youth of this scientific enterprise or not rather to the dictates of a method that disregards the specific nature of the subject matter, or perhaps even to some metaphysical assumptions inherent in the method.

The foregoing reflections on some of the passions, emotions, moods, and sentiments of man show that patience and impatience, hope and fear, care and carelessness, love and hate, and the like—despite all their variability—hold their mutable



names to a nucleus of meaning, which remains the same. Beyond that they contain a preliminary thesis about these passions. They are distinct forms of relationship—tissues of interacting relations of man to himself, to things, to other men, to the world. Thus they have their place in a fundamental structure of 'life'. The fundamental structure is a contextual unity of possible relations between man and thing, man and man, man and world, tentatively drawn in a preliminary scheme. If this scheme is called the 'human situation', the human situation is social situation, since 'man' cannot be thought of as an isolated individual. This scheme is the frame of human possibilities, which no history can overstep. Within this frame all changes change, all evolution evolves, all life lives.

The relation of this fundamental structure to the particular situation of the particular human being corresponds to the relation of geometric space to a particular geometric figure. Space is the rule all figures must obey. Each figure presupposes and contains the whole of this rule. The concrete man of any society or age carries with him in any moment and throughout his life the whole of the context of the *entière condition humaine*.

The term 'situation' disregards time. The human situation includes man's being in time—the time-structure of life. In this time-structure past, present, and future are hooked into one another. They refer to one another, though in various ways that change within and only within the fabric of the fundamental structure. Any psychologist or sociologist who uses the man-environment scheme presupposes a relational structure. The scheme I substitute though still meager, is fuller. In it the relation is prior to the relata it relates. The relatum is carrier of the relation. The You means being a You, the We being a We, the world being a world. Hence the You means a definite function or role, no matter who or what plays or does not play it. Perhaps my You is not at all a You, my We not a We, my world not a world, yet I do not escape the 'human situation'. Even without a You that could play the role of the You the lack of a You to me is part of the human reality—its absence is present. Very



much so indeed: plants and animals do not respond. My God turns his back on me. The woman I captured yesterday sits in the corner of my cave and stares at me.

The context of the human situation, prior to all human factuality, is only the frame of man's modes of being. The whole of the context accompanies any mode of being, which at any time may be factual. By virtue of this co-presence of the context as a whole, the possibility of another mode of being is silently present; the happy man remains a being that can be miserable, the proud man a being capable of humility—in the same manner as in the man-environment scheme the adjusted man remains a being that could be maladjusted and may be soon—if his steppes dry up or his city is destroyed.

However, I am concerned with the structure of the human situation as such, not yet with things and conditions given in history. Hence the co-presence of one possibility in the other refers only to the relations themselves, that is, to modes of being, such as bad or good adjustment, happiness or misery, pride or humility, not to steppes that dry up or cities that burn down. Though this relational structure is a bare skeleton, it is a unity, a whole, not an aggregate; a skeleton, not a heap of bones. The bones are conjoined—only in their joints do they move; in the movement of the bones the skeleton moves. Even if only one bone moves, the skeleton moves. This skeleton, moving in its joints, remains the same skeleton.

In looking at the movements of the bones the science of man easily forgets the movement of the skeleton.

The single relation is what it is in the whole of the structure whose 'logos' it obeys. Hence the human passions are not an aggregate, consisting of a number of separable pieces, indifferent to one another, and contingent. Man, capable of love and hate, must be capable of pride and humility, shame and awe, though for changeable reasons this man here and now may be incapable of this particular shame or awe. Everyone knows a bit of each passion, though he may not be able to recognize and identify it. Hence we understand the wrath of Achilles and the endurance of Odysseus though we may be entirely incapable of such wrath and such patience. Hence



the passions are usually the only things and certainly the first thing we 'understand' in human beings of alien cultures. The anthropologist, in comparing cultures, speaks of pride, shame, fear, hate, envy, and presupposes that in the cultures he compares they are somehow at bottom the very same sentiments he and his readers have in mind when they use these words.

The human situation contains within its fundamental context the points from which manifold variations depart. Mutable relations of man to himself, to things, to other men, to the world conceived as mutable, interknit back and forth in mutable ways, within the frame of the context.

When we leave the aspect of the 'One', that is, the unity of a context within which possible modes of being are distinguished, and enter the aspect of the Many, that is, the order of the historical actualities extended in time and space, we have to do with a definite other I and his being or not being a You or with a definite *mundus hominum* and *mundus rerum* and its being or not being a world. Now we have to do with distinctions and qualifications of a different kind, that is, with the obstinate nature of entities not implied in one another as possibilities of man.

Under this aspect my care here and now is care for these olive trees, for this profit from the sale of the olives, for the well-being of my children, or for the favor of this goddess. Whereas the possibility of careless behavior silently accompanies my care, the olive tree does not imply the possibility of the cow. Since, however, the specific nature of the olive tree mingles into the kind of my care, my care for the olive tree is not the same as my care for the cow, though both are care, not carelessness.

The context of the human situation articulates mere possibilities. The human reality is historical reality. Man's 'existence' is historical existence. Man is born into a definite historical situation, as a this one amid these stubborn things—men, institutions, ideas, gods. Here he must move, while all these things move in their own way, resisting or yielding. Extended in time and space are the many things. Here and



now this stubborn man exists as one of the things in a pre-given world. We explore the order of this world, its laws relative to any possible observer; we call this intersubjective world the objective world, absolutize it, and on the basis of its order try to say what man, as one of the many given beings, is. Under this aspect of the Many in time and space, however, many things by virtue of which man's life is life—concretely and intensely—may escape us. Man's 'existence' is historical existence; history the history of existence. In history the things, their specific nature, their interrelations in the order of the Many, the institutions, the social structures, the so-called works of the mind, the cosmic images, are what they do and mean and could do and mean to men.

Albeit my care for the cow must respect her nature, which the zoologist studies relatively to any possible observer, the cow of zoology is not the cow of history. The cow of history is the cow of man, of his care and carelessness.

Though this human function of the cow or its equivalents in life is at the bottom of all the historical functions which from one point of view or another we may ascribe to one being with respect to other beings in the mutable constellations of the historical things, the 'existential' function itself is none of the historical functions we mean when we talk about historical, economic, social, or cultural processes in which events seem to have a 'function' or to play a 'role' for an alleged result of such a process.

What makes life more or less 'intense'? The question can be asked, though no one seems to bother. Without some obstinacy in the things in my care, my care would be nothing. But this obstinacy too, if separated from the possible relationship to the life of man, is empty without my care or pride or fear or delight.

Human 'existence' exists only in the historical world of stubborn things. Only in the life of man is the stubbornness of historical things a living reality. My care on the one hand and the obstinate nature of cows on the other are really real only with respect to each other.

Concrete care is never alone with itself—nothing but care.



In its shades and half shades manifold movements of sentiments or thoughts are co-present in many ways of 'co-presence', bestowing upon care a definite color and making it a different care. Delight in the cared-for things mingles in—also pride or modesty; perhaps reverence, love, or even fear not only for, but also of, the thing of care. Manifold feelings, some even opposed to or incompatible with one another, interpenetrate one another in tensions and conflicts of all kinds—only in this way is my care concrete care.

This the poets know; the more the better poets they are. They guard against letting care be nothing but care, fear nothing but fear, love nothing but love—for they are enamored of life.

Care as sentiment cannot be isolated from other sentiments, nor can care defined as a specific relation of man to the object of his care be isolated from the other relations. Every and any concrete case of care interknits the relations of man to his things with the relations of his things to other men and to his world, in a thousand tensions and discords, in having and lacking, in desire, want, and danger.

Thus the search for the concrete reality of life leads first from bare care as an isolated sentiment to a texture of many sentiments, then from the isolated relations between man and thing to a texture of many relations, and finally through both to the whole of a fabric in which the sentiments entail one another as possibilities of the human soul and the single relation in its specific nature is what it is together with the others, permeating and permeated by them all.

However, the relational structure as such is no less an abstraction than isolated relations. Its tissue of relations is concrete only with respect to a pregiven obstinacy of the relata related in these relations. The relations themselves presuppose a stubborn nature of the relata. I could not be proud of my garden or worried about my cow unless the garden and the cow were stubborn things, with demands and natures of their own, independent of my pride and care. The things resist and yield, surprise and disappoint; they have their stupidity and their malice and forever hold back a last secret.



My thing is not the thing itself. 'My' or 'our' world is not and will never be 'the' world. The eternal tension between my thing and the thing itself or between its meaning and its nature, between my world and the world is part of the situation of man as a finite being. We can bestow on the things many a meaning, let them play many roles. We cannot make them be whatever we please. We must in any case let them remain something that they have already been.

But man's relation to the thing is not alone in presupposing such a pre-given stubbornness. Only by virtue of a remnant of an obstinate nature, of a remaining possibility of surprise can the I be an I, the You a You—as another to the I. Only by being other than myself can my world embrace me. By being other, my world can slip out of my embrace and break to pieces.

The stubborn nature of things and men mixes delight or fear or pride into my care in any concrete case in this and in no other specific manner. The particularity of things, men, institutions, traditions, ideas, and gods weaves in this and no other way the modes of being—an I, a You, a We, their roles, and the role of the world as a whole.

If we begin at the other end, however, starting not from care or pride as a definite kind of relation, but from the relata as existing entities and their 'objective' nature, disregarding the relation to man, the relata too are, when isolated, a lifeless abstraction.

Starting from the olive tree as a thing among things, from myth or language as works of the mind, from the Christian idea of God among other ideas of god, from an institution among other institutions in a cosmos of institutions, we may ask what it is by which all these as historical facts are concrete living reality. The force of this question drives us, reluctant or willing, from the place of all these things in an objective order of the many existing things to their roles, functions, meanings in the context of a life in which human beings are happy or miserable, the olive trees are objects of care or greed, language links an I to a You in a We and guides the interpretation of the things.



These functions, roles, or meanings of things or ideas are not in their turn functions in this or that historical context but point beyond all mutable contexts to something else, to the fundamental structure of man's life. Here they originate; here alone are they real. In historical change the objective nature of things, institutions, and ideas is 'real' only by virtue of their role in the 'life' of man. Thus the way to the concreteness of life leads downward from the bare skeleton of the human situation to the obstinate particularity of the things; from this particularity, which by itself is lifeless, it leads upward to the context of the human situation in which these stubborn particularities are what they do and mean to man.

Science aims at 'laws'—constant relations between variables, which enable us to draw conclusions from the known to the unknown. The science of man, however, has not yet discovered universal variables that belong to every and any human society, let alone constant relations. Since its variables are not universal, their relations not constant, its laws are not laws and change as societies change.

The way from any general concept whatsoever to the uniqueness of the concrete case leads through a jungle of countless variables. Science, in trying to bring some order into this multiplicity, should be guided by the nature of the subject matter itself, not by a method borrowed from other sciences. It must take into account that the relevance of variables for the matter itself may have nothing to do with their comfortable and reliable verifiability, not to mention quantitative measurements of their values. A glance at concrete human life tells the unbiased observer that this is actually the case; hence the strange lifelessness, complained of ever again, of results gained by giving the scientific method priority over the subject matter.

The quest for the concrete reality divides the multitude of variables into two 'groups of transformation'. The first group belongs to the fundamental context of human life. Following present-day connotations of 'existence' in commonsense discourse, I call them preliminarily 'existential variables'. They distinguish modes of being, *modi essendi*, not beings, *entia*.



They are variables of the relations between man, thing, the other man, and the world. They refer back and forth to one another in the relational structure of man's *esse*. In this contextual unity these variables are bound together by a specific 'logos'. They cannot be separated from one another. There is no life in which only some of these variables but not the others are present. Moreover, their variability is limited. In any actual value of each its possible values are co-present. To and fro between happiness and misery, pride and humility, hope and fear, life totters.

The variables of the second group of transformation have to do not with the relations but with the relata and their stubborn nature, pre-given in any moment of life. These variables I call the historical variables. Their nature changes in the course of history. They are posited as things, beings, *entia* of a definite, pre-given nature, objective existents in an order of the Many, extended in space and time. They obey a different 'logos'. They are not forged together in the unity of a structure. Here the one is not the one to its others.

Therefore, whereas man's *esse* flits to and fro between the modes of being, be it of care and carelessness, of pride and humility, history alters the obstinate things or matters of our care and carelessness, pride and humility. Since the specific nature of the things mingles in the kind of our care and carelessness, the single historical case or concrete manifestation of care is unique and incomparable, ever again a different care, yet it still submits to 'analogy', comparable as care or pride. The uniqueness permeates the analogy and limits it, but the analogy in turn pervades the uniqueness and limits it. The incomparable remains comparable, the comparable incomparable. The source of all analogies is the universal analogy, the structure of man's 'Being'. The source of all uniqueness is the mutable obstinacy of mutable things.

The distinction between the two groups of variables bares the peculiar difficulty of applying the scientific method. The two groups stand in different relations to the observer. The 'existential' variables are πρότερον φύσει, ὕστερον πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ("prior by nature but posterior relatively to us"); the histor-



ical variables are πρότερον πρὸς ἡμᾶς, but ὕστερον φύσει ("prior relatively to us but posterior by nature"). Hence we describe the former by means of the latter, that is, care in terms of the object of our care, the relation on the basis of the particular relata in a world posited as absolute, the structure of man's 'Being' in the cloak of mutable conditions. The observer identifies the variables of the first group only with the help of the variables of the second group.

Thus the unity of the logos in which the relations are tied together, the co-presence of each in the others, disappears in a multiplicity of mutable natures of mutable things. We hide the immutable in the mutable and the universal variables in their time-conditioned historical manifestations. Finally, the ὕστερον φύσει, since it is πρότερον πρὸς ἡμᾶς and hence easier to verify, is taken as πρότερον φύσει. The interest of the student of man turns from concrete life to correlations of isolated data in an absolutized environment of the observer. No wonder that no laws are discovered and that the validity of any correlations depends upon the continuation of the conditions in whose terms the variables are identified.

Even the scientific man will eventually be compelled to ponder the particularity of his subject matter before attempting to apply the scientific method. The student of man, in formulating his questions, must be aware of the possibility that the universal variables he is searching for cannot be found in reliably verifiable data of the mutable phenomena without some prescientific thinking. If regard for comfortable application of the methods guides the selection of the facts, the facts will be divorced from their context, the context forgotten; the isolated facts will be artifacts of the observer.

This context, however, is not now this, now that connection with some other given facts. At the bottom of all these mutable contexts is a context of a different kind in which alone the facts and their mutable connections are 'facts'. Before questions are asked and methods applied, a hypothetical model must articulate this fundamental context. Observation after observation will confirm, refute, correct the initial hypothesis. The model cannot be constructed in terms of, and



be chained to, mutable conditions. It must contain within itself the point of departure for possible variations. If and only if it does, can it guide the questioning and sort out meaningful from meaningless questions. These reflections do not aim at more than taking a few preliminary steps toward the construction of such a model. It may even be that only such a procedure really emulates the natural sciences. At any rate, some respect for the particular nature of the subject matter is the first commandment of all science.



## *Chapter 2*

# MAN AND HISTORY

**T**HE HISTORIAN TOO, whether he knows and wills it or not, cannot help dealing with the immutable in mutable man. He is not in quest of laws; he describes the particular. What kind of particular? What is in the particular?

To the historian the truth of a description means in practice its concordance with a kind of reality, the 'historical reality'. To him the problem of truth is the problem of this historical reality and its specific character. To him this question is independent of and prior to the other problem—how to verify the truth. The historian cannot detach from his subject matter, ere he starts, those areas or layers that lend themselves conveniently to specific demands of a scientific method and forget about the others. Thus he cannot share the general belief in the sovereignty of the scientific method over the subject matter. To him the method does not determine the subject matter; the subject matter determines the method. He cannot assume beforehand that the joints at which the subject matter should be divided are those suggested by his preference for reliable verification. In devotion to a subject matter whose specific texture he must respect, he develops methods that are neither less elaborate nor less exacting than those of the experimental method.



If to the historian truth means first of all truth about a definite reality, what is this reality? I base my reasoning on the historiographer proper, who describes the course of events; on the great historian, who seems to have achieved something; on what he does in practice, not on what he says in theory, as his theoretical utterances may depend upon the philosophy of his day and not coincide with his practice.

He may not know, many not even intend to do what he does. He selects a topic. But there is a limitation: his subject matter is a piece of human life. By belonging to the past, a fact does not thereby become an historical fact. The movement of cotton prices in Alabama from 1840 to 1850, if isolated and seen in an abstract cosmos of prices, is material for history, not history itself. Only in the history of man do cotton prices move along with other things. The historian is concerned with the role these movements of cotton prices played in the changing life of these changing men. Even languages, institutions, religions, though they certainly have a history, are in themselves not 'historical facts'; only in the human context can their history be written; here only are they concrete. Whatever topic is selected, the reference to human life remains silently present—as question imposed upon the historian by the subject matter itself.

The historian wants to report how things actually happen, *Wie es gewesen ist*, as Ranke put it, or "to represent things truly", as Thomas Madox put it. Thus he starts with a multiplicity of 'facts'. What guides his selection? He selects the causally relevant and omits the ineffectual as irrelevant. So we are told. The beauty of a lady becomes a fact of American history when Alexander Hamilton falls in love with her. But the word 'causality' is loosely used. The so-called chain of causes and effects is merely a first illusion of the historian. If such a chain means a chain of events in time, in which each preceding link is the cause of the following as its effect, no historian has ever succeeded in constructing such a chain.

The causality of the historian is not the causality of such chains. An historical occurrence emerges from the past and operates on the future. The historian shows in the way he



reports the course of events, the field of historical forces and their constellation, the dynamic situation in which the events occur. Such a dynamic field is far from simple. It changes under the impact of the events. It has many layers, some changing so slowly that they seem to be permanent, others so quickly that their changes seem to be single events. The different layers and their changes interact. In the course of the concrete events the historian describes, all the historical forces of the dynamic situation entwine, in a way unique in each case. We cannot identify all these forces by name. They include not only mountains and gods, institutions and machines, mentalities of collectivities, power of passions and words, interests and ideas, but this powerful man here and now and his dark heart as well. This dynamic field, the fabric of slowly or quickly moving forces, is the causality of the historian, though he may talk in terms of causal chains. After all, events become causes only by virtue of such a dynamic field—everywhere and not only in history. By reporting the course of events and constructing always abbreviated and never accurate causal chains, the historian describes indirectly the dynamic field and its movement. For the sake of this description he selects this and omits that datum from a multiplicity of data.

The historian, consequently, will and sometimes must report facts that in one way or another are representative of the forces in the historical field, though as occurrences they may be without relevant effect. The historian may occasionally report an anecdote. Many a modern looks down on Herodotus, the father of history-writing, because his history seems to be sometimes merely a sequence of anecdotes. We should bear him no grudge, however, even if we suspect some of his anecdotes are not precisely true. The representative value of his anecdotes is rather high. Some are representative of the dynamic fields, even of a 'general movement' in which the East overflows the West and recedes again.

Of his famous speeches Thucydides says that he was unable to ascertain the actual wording of all, though the speeches he reports could or should have been made by these men in these



situations. Some of these speeches, masterpieces of rhetoric, are certainly not the actual speeches. In general, statesmen, envoys, soldiers, are not so articulate; most of ours, their ghost writers included, are not. Thucydides intended his speeches to bring to light the dynamics of men and things in each situation and this they do, perhaps even better than the speeches actually made.

The historical legend is a particular case. Luther's real answer at the Diet of Worms was a simple 'no' uttered in a low and hesitant voice, instead of his famous "*hier stehe ich; ich kann nicht anders*", the legend may be thought to be more representative. For this reason the historian may report the legend; however, if he is cautious, merely as a legend. The timid 'no' may be more representative for the particular man and the particular situation, telling the deeper story. Even in this case the birth of the legend can be representative too. In most cases the real facts are richer—and queerer—than anything man can invent, though their riches are hidden. The particular in the particularity of its historical context is inexhaustible.

It can happen that the inaccurate facts of one historian tell a true story about the dynamic field, whereas the accurate facts of another tell a false story or none at all. This, however, is not due to any mystical intuition. Jacob Burckhardt's *Griechische Kulturgeschichte* is far superior to all other such attempts, though the evidence he presents, faulty in many instances, is open to philological criticism. This does not mean that he did not have any evidence, but that the evidence he presents is not precisely that from which he derived his answers. He was not a philologist; he read the sources with a mind trained by the study of many a culture, asked the relevant questions, and found the right answers, though this and that particular evidence does not prove what he thought it proved.

The dynamic field is only a modest and incomplete answer to our immodest question about the why of the single event. This answer does not establish a must. Not everything that actually happened has been probable, let alone necessary.



Sometimes even the improbable happens in history; rather frequently indeed if the 'improbable' is meant relatively to the knowledge of the present situation we actually possess; less frequently if it is meant relatively to the maximum knowledge a finite intellect can possess; perhaps even in rare cases if it is meant relatively to a perfect knowledge of the present a divine observer may have. The historian avoids dogmatic pre-assumptions about the structure of his subject matter. His main temptation and his capital sin against concrete history is to draw conclusions from the actual to its probability, from the probable to its necessity. Things are not so simple. In each dynamic field the necessary and the contingent permeate each other in different and changing ways and mixtures. The particularity of their mixture is even the most relevant particularity of the 'structure' of such a dynamic field. It changes the day war is declared. It was different in the age of Charlemagne and in the last two centuries of the Roman empire in the West. It is as if history went on changing the boards of the children's games or slot machines in which a ball rolls from nail to nail, to this or that hole or exit. Sometimes the acting man has but a narrow range of possibilities; little differences matter a great deal and diverging boundaries of the board widen the range of possible consequences. Sometimes the range of initial alternatives for action seems wide, but converging boundaries force the rolling ball along different ways to the same exit. Hence the historian should not assume necessities in advance of his finding; perhaps he should be rather cautious in using sentences beginning with 'because'. Perhaps an all-knowing God writing the history of man, the great fool, for human readers would begin many a sentence with 'nevertheless' and in doing so accurately describe the foolishness of man as part and parcel of a history that is the history of man, not God.

The historian is in love with the particular. The dynamic field too is a particular one—this configuration of these forces in these men and things. When the steppes dry up, the cattle die, and the children starve, it happens to a particular people which is ossified in ancestral habits or still flexible, in these



fetters to this past, this country, these holy places and gods, with that particular power structure. Only in such a context does starvation become : n historical fact. Hunger alone would be repeatable, but hunger is never alone. A particular context of these stubborn things, men, and gods moves in a unique way from a unique past into a unique future.

The historian does not enumerate these forces or give them general names. He has no high opinion of such names as capitalism or nationalism; he may distinguish but he does not separate factors. He refers the one to the other—in one another they are effective. To him gods or their equivalents emerge in a world of potential hunger—hunger occurs in a world full of gods and ideas. To the historian nothing is the abstract universal. Only the particular is really real. His practice, devotion to his subject matter, cures him quickly of any theories about general priorities of interests over ideas or of ideas over interests. His priorities change in history.

The historian reports the course of events, sequences of facts in time. Owing to the relevance of his facts and his ways of reporting, the dynamic field and its movement become more or less visible. His narrative is more or less transparent. As, however, his view of the dynamic field may be faulty, though his facts may be accurate, or vice versa, it is useful to distinguish between two objects of the truth he seeks: the truth about the naked facts and the truth about the dynamic field suggested by or transparent in these facts. The aim of the historian is neither the one nor the other of these truths separately, but the transparency of the second in the first. Though this seems relatively simple, of course it is not. The term 'dynamic field' hides many difficulties. The conscious and professed intention of the historian may end here. The highest aim he admits may be to describe truly conspicuous events showing the dynamic field in its movement from its past to its present. He may sometimes look beyond the individual historical form he describes and strain his eyes to discover in the wandering fogs at least some recognizable contours of a piece of *allgemeiner geschichtlicher Bewegung* of a greater period, as Ranke did, and let the feudal state of



the Middle Ages grow into the absolute monarchy and the absolute monarchy into the national state or anything else of the same order of magnitude. But whatever his intention, wittingly or unwittingly, in his very devotion to and compelled by the particularity of his subject matter, he reaches another truth and achieves another transparency—unless his interest for those general movements or a concern for the meaning of the historical process as a whole transfers his concern from the inner life of the particular to the construction of roles or meanings in such a general movement or the historical process as a whole.

What is—in *concreto*—such a dynamic field? A last hope drives the ancestors of the ancient Egyptians from the expanding desert into the still uninhabitable swamps of the Nile. For centuries they fight the River for some pieces of fertile soil. The particular situation requires and finally elicits an organized effort: power, command, compulsion. Kings arise, taxes, accountants, priests. The new power, chaining the River, reinterprets the world. In the image of this world man reinterprets his own existence. The interests of men, their needs, their ideas, norms, and gods grow in one another. A distinct way of life, an individual historical form, is established and strives to maintain itself. Man made it. In its frame man moves, either patiently in fixed habits or lugging and tugging at its fetters. The historian tries to describe it in its particularity—this River behaving differently from all other rivers, these strange gods, roles of the dead, institutions, unique particularities. In his description the dynamic field, a constellation of factors, geographic, economic, social, political, ideological, comes to life. But it has never been anything else than the answer to men and to the things and the response of the things to that answer.

As in the narrative of the historian, the events proceed one after the other, partly dependent, partly independent, of one another, and the many forces and factors of the many-layered dynamic fields entwine, in this narrative too a third kind of truth becomes visible. Though this third kind of truth can not be separated from the events and the forces in the field



and hence is difficult to identify separately, it is different and should be distinguished. The historian does not and need not distinguish it—this third kind of truth is not a part of his conscious intention. It should not be; if it were, he would probably miss it.<sup>1</sup>

By virtue of this second transparence the mere events and factors are no longer merely objective things in an order of the many things in space and time; they are seen and are what they are by virtue of the role they play or the functions they have in the life of man. Here is their concrete reality. The absolute *potestas* of the Roman *pater familias* is no longer an institution in an institutional realm, to be defined by its *differentia specifica*. If it were, it would be but an abstraction, lifeless and dead. It is what it is in the context of Roman life. It would be something entirely different in the family of today. The historian looks through the things as things to the particular human context in which these institutions and passions and dreams of man entwine with these things and gods, to this kind of misery and happiness. The historian, devoted to the concrete particularity of his subject matter, cannot help avoiding any isolation and separation of any of these forces and factors we would like to analyze and study separately, thinking as we do of the dynamic field as a sort of aggregate of all these factors. They are united in a contextual unity; here they originate and here they change.

By the ambiguous terms 'roles' and 'functions' I do not mean the 'historical' role or function of a man, a thing, an event, in this or that development, in the success of a revolution or anything else of the kind in which the observer may be interested. Though Ranke says the role of the Byzantine Empire was to keep Asia from Europe, the Byzantines certainly did not think about their role. I do not mean such historical roles. I mean roles and functions in a context we call human life, though life here is not merely life in the mirror of biology.

This human context, in which the things are their roles or functions, is again a particular one—of this life in this country and age. But its particularity is no longer the particularity of



the single facts and factors out of an indefinite multiplicity of possible facts and factors of an objectified world. It is the particularity of a variation of human life that becomes manifest in the clothes of the historical conditions, institutions, things, words, events.

I may be permitted to call this particularity a third kind of truth—and the transparence of the facts and the dynamic field in which it becomes visible the second transparence. Historical descriptions differ widely in this second transparence. In some, man himself, concrete life, disappears completely in the process of the development of objective facts and abstract forces and factors.

The third particularity seems no less unique than the particular cloak of the historical conditions in which it becomes real. Yet as a variation of a definite context, the particular carries with it something that is no longer a particular: the structure of this context. We may learn from the strange peculiarity of a past life the peculiarity of our own way of life or of our own age of which we are usually unaware. Thus we may learn something about *die Breite des Menschenwesens*, the broad range of human possibilities. It is, however, not only the stupid quantity of this range; in it and behind it something else becomes visible, though perhaps only dimly and at a remote distance, and shines through the narrative of the historian: the unity of a context, the fabric of man's existence, the tissue of many strands, as the frame no history can break, within whose iron bounds all developments develop and all evolutions evolve—again outside and beyond the intention of the historian.

Thus in this second transparence the particular course of events in its dynamic field is a particular aspect of mutable man. In this aspect, however, a general context becomes visible, as a fourth kind of truth in a third kind of transparence. It is the context in which man binds himself in the deeds he does, the words he creates, the power he establishes, in which he starves and cares and reaches out for gods or their equivalents. Restless man, who only for a short time and never entirely is what he could be, can be what he wants to be,



wants to be what he ought to be, forever on his way inbetween 'is', 'can', 'will', 'must', 'ought', and many other such 'inbetweens', knowing and ignorant, fearful and greedy, full of care and careless, potentially the most magnificent and the meanest of all animals. I call it for the moment the 'eternal humanum'.

This *humanum* is not human nature as the term is used in scientific treatises which distinguish inherited and acquired traits; it is not the 'human being', let alone the organism, not life in the mirror of biology. It is not the individual as individual. It is historical man, man as he moves and is moved in the movement of history. There is no other man. Man is mutable, the *humanum* is but the eternal frame of his mutability. It is not the usual universal of a class, a species, a genus of beings, let alone an essence in a realm of essences. It is the universal context, present in all situations and their changes. I could call it, in the language of Michel de Montaigne, *l'entière forme de la condition humaine*. I could call it, using the language of geometry, the topology of the human space, present as unity of a context in all the countless figures of all the possible Euclidean and non-Euclidean spaces. It is in all the dynamic fields, and none of their changes can violate its rules.

However, the topological axioms of the human space are unknown to man. Goethe says in a poem: *das Besondere ist das Allgemeine*. This proposition, though meaningless, has a meaning. This universal *humanum* becomes visible only in the inner richness of the particular. Here it becomes concrete. The particular is concrete by virtue of the many forces, relations, factors, grown together in its particularity. No scientific isolation and separation of factors ever reaches this concreteness of life in the particular.

The historian does not make this *humanum* the context of any proposition. We may sense it or see it with an inner eye. Such feeling or sensing may not be at all the conscious intention of the historian. He simply cannot help himself, though he may not know what he does and only describes ever mutable man. It happens to us in reading or to the great



historian in writing—to his own astonishment—and prompts him to confess in the middle of his devotion to the particularity of this mutable man, that, after all, man is what he always has been and ever will be. This happened to Jakob Burckhardt.

Hence we may understand that Thucydides not only pretended to have written but really wrote a *κτῆμα εἰς αἰὲν*, a thing forever. Whatever his reasons for his belief, it is by virtue of the transience of an eternal humanum, in a transient particular gone forever.

Modern man no longer lives in the world of his grandfathers. We know it. The space in which we move has moved and goes on moving. Motion in motion is difficult in many respects. Historical consciousness is born when a society realizes that the space in which it moves moves. Many identify historical consciousness with history. But this consciousness of history is itself a product of history. As man, aware of this awkward motion in motion, may easily lose his balance, he tries to extend the order whose idea should guide and support him into the unknown future. When the timeless gods desert him, he contrives a philosophy of history that pretends to know or to be able to interpret the meaning of the universal process. This is a natural, politically efficient though theoretically vain effort.

But how should the historian, himself standing in history, not sitting outside it on the throne of a divine observer, describe motion in motion? What is his frame of reference? His own ephemeral age and its prospective activities? The historian may not ask the question and may not have a theoretical answer. Objective nature—the mountains which stand still and the trees which become green again—is but his apparent frame of reference. His real frame is that 'humanum' or the wide or narrow, rich or poor, image of it he or his age may cherish. Though he does not even try to formulate this image, he can not help indicating its width or narrowness, richness or meagerness, and in it his own measure.

Under a twofold aspect the historian looks at the confused and everchanging spectacle of history. Under the one aspect



things, posited as objective, identified in an order of an objective world, stand still and cling to their identity. Against their unmoving background restless man alters but their meanings, roles, functions. This is the natural aspect of our daily life. Under the other aspect these things are what they are only by virtue of human uses, roles, functions, meanings which, though invested in or carried by changing things, are as mere roles and functions fundamentally the same. They have their place in the same humanum which is forever fire—though here flaring and blazing, there glowing dimly under the ashes, it changes but the color and the shape of the flame.

When in the work of the great historian the two aspects blend, he succeeds in an astonishing feat: he makes manifest the eternal humanum in the change of mutable things, the ever mutable man in the quiet permanence of objective things. Though his image of man, narrower or broader, may be the historian's secret frame of reference, he need not answer or even pretend to answer the question, "What is man?" It may even be that he denies that such a question has a meaning and be content to show how mutable man, in the course of his history, builds up and tears down and varies and revises his images of 'eternal man.' In all these images man is identified by his place in, or is described in terms of, an historical world—the Christian, the Greek, the Chinese image of the cosmos of many things, one of which is man. To the historian none of these worlds is absolute, though each has been posited as absolute. They come to be and pass away in history. Thus if there is any eternal humanum, mutable man grasps it only in his own mutable images of a mutable world.

The historian, confronted with the paradox of a knowledge of man he must presuppose and cannot claim, escapes into an historical relativism—in theory. Yet it may be that the inner life of the particularity to which he is devoted may force his practice to transcend his theory.

Of these mutable images some are wide, others narrow; some are rich, others poor; some are more, others less, articulate. Though all are images in terms of an historical cosmos and easily weave the image of what man should be into the



image of what he is, they are unequal, containing more or less knowledge. Though man need not be what he says he is, even the words by which he deceives himself can tell a story. Moreover, his deeds are more honest than his words. As there is more or less knowledge in these images, though they may be mere opinions, the knowledge of that eternal *humanum* has a history in which not only opinions change but knowledge grows and decays. There is more knowledge of man in the Greek than in the Germanic mythology. Thucydides knows more than others. Shakespeare's knowledge is greater than Dryden's. Shakespeare's favorite author was Montaigne, who, though he pretends merely to describe the only subject he knows, himself, Michel de Montaigne, *l'homme particulier*, succeeds in making transparent "the entire condition of man" as, proceeding from one particularity to another, he uses and refers to the whole body of inherited knowledge he got from the ancients.

Thus the historian, notwithstanding his relativism, by virtue of his devotion to the particularity of a bygone past, can loosen the fetters that tie him to the narrow image of man in his own ephemeral age and become a knower not only of man's changing opinions but of an eternal *humanum*, of which these mutable images are mutable aspects. As this knowledge grows with his knowledge of history, he may in practice be a great interpreter of an eternal *humanum* which he denies in theory.



## PART SEVEN

### *What is Man?*

#### THE THREE MEANINGS OF THE QUESTION

*“What did I believe I am? Without seeing any difficulty, I thought I am a man. But what is that: a man?”<sup>1</sup> Descartes’ question consists of an assertion and a question: Man is. What is he? Since the ‘is’ in the assertion and the ‘is’ in the question may not be the same ‘is’, behind Descartes’ question arises another and still greater question: the meaning of ‘is’. What is the ‘is’?*

*It is an old question, ever again asked and ever again forgotten. Plato asks: “What do you intend to denote when your lips utter the words ‘to be’?”<sup>2</sup> Aristotle says: “The question raised of old and raised now and ever to be raised and forever a matter of doubt: what is Being?”<sup>3</sup>*

*Let him who blindly trusts the matters of course and scoffs at philosophy be warned: he should not read further; what follows would not please him.*

*We can try in three ways to answer the question, ‘What is man?’ The first way is the way of science. The answer is ‘scientific’ and tries to be ‘exact’. The second way is the way of societies in history. Naming a genus by its most honest representative, I call their answers ‘mythological’. The third way is the way of philosophy. It is really not one but many ways which cross one another. Many of them return in circles to their starting points.*

*The controversy about the truth of different answers is twofold. It is first a quarrel about the truth of different answers within the same group of answers: of one scientific an-*



swer against others, of mythological against mythological, of philosophical against philosophical, answers. Second, it is a controversy between the groups concerning the meaning of truth.

The three groups are guided by different principles concerning the meaning of 'is' in the question. To exact science the 'is' indicates that man belongs to an order of the many existing things or occurrences or events or entities, extended in space and time, actually or potentially given to, observed or observable by, the scientific observer. There are, among other things, human beings. Science explores the order of the Many, its regularities or rules, and determines the single thing by its place in this order, relative to an anonymous observer posited outside this order.

In the mythological answers this order is the world-image of a mutable society. This world, however, does not, as another thing, confront the man who asks and answers the question; it encompasses and includes him and his questions and answers.

Philosophy refuses to accept unquestioned the assumption made by both science and mythology—that 'is' cannot mean anything else than belonging to such an order of the Many, extended in space and time. Philosophy questions the meaning of 'is'. In the awareness of this questionability, philosophy lives as philosophy.

Since, however, all attempts at an answer in any of the three ways come up against unscalable walls, men, discouraged and doubting the way they have chosen, flee from science into mythology, from mythology into science, from both into philosophy, from philosophy into both. The differences in the principles separating the three ways are forgotten; the boundaries are disregarded—the answers are fake, semblance and pretense. An alleged scientism becomes bad mythology and finally dresses up as philosophy. Mythology, unsure of itself, is adorned with scientific or philosophical terms. Philosophy forsakes the question which is its living breath and is content to hang a philosophical cloak on a mythological or scientific pretense of an answer.

Man obviously wants under all circumstances at least to believe he knows what he is.



## *Chapter 1*

# THE SCIENTIFIC WAY OF ANSWERING THE QUESTION

**E**XACT SCIENCE does not ask what is man; not yet, not for a long time to come. In the mirror of the concepts in which science orders the Many, man is much too complex. Science may ask what is the stone or the cell or the virus or the atom. Hereby it assumes that the discovered principle of order of the simpler things will later explain the more complex. Moreover, physics, the model of all exact science, no longer speaks of 'reality'. It contents itself with the 'physically real'. It continues, however, to presuppose silently that all other reality will finally be shown to be physical reality.

The not quite exact sciences want to be exact. As far as sciences are concerned with man they squint for guidance at physics, though in many cases at an already obsolete physics.<sup>4</sup> Biology and physiology look to chemistry and physics, psychology to biology or physiology, sociology to biology or psychology. From physics they take over the scientific method, the type of law they search for, the kind of order they assume in their hypotheses, the general notion of reality, presupposed in the formulation of the scientific method. Even psychology, like physics, does not seek man, but regularities



of facts in this or that area—perception, learning, memory, and so on.

As I have to do with the principle guiding the search for an answer, not with the contents of alleged answers, I take physics as the example of the scientific way of putting and answering the question of 'is'. Physics is the model, is accepted as the model, emulated even by the social sciences, and resorted to whenever the social scientist is asked for his meaning of the scientific method. Its prestige is enormous, supported ever and ever again by new and more astonishing discoveries.

If exact science were asking the question, it could only proceed with man just as it does with the stone. What is the stone? I stumble over it. I cannot deny that it is! You pick it up and throw it. It can be used in building a house. Thus it is to us the totality of whatever can be done with it. Science identifies the nature the stone insists upon asserting toward any and everyone. This kind of reality is not altogether satisfactory—it is a possible suchness relative to a generalized observer. This reality of the stone is reality of an object to a possible subject—anyone. The objectivity of its suchness is intersubjectivity. However, this is not what we mean. The stone 'is'. Its mere existence is not relative to any observer but must be posited as absolute. Its suchness alone is relative. There is something; I call it a stone. I identify its suchness relative to the scientific observer.<sup>5</sup>

The stone is identified and qualified by its place in the order of the observable Many. Its place answers the question, what is the stone? But this order itself is suchness for something else: the anonymous observer, the generalized subject to the stone, which is qualified as object by its suchness for others.

The observer, be it the individual or the generalized subject of observation, stands outside the observed system. If this system is the world as the universe of all real things, the observer himself is not real. The world as totality of all observed things is a world of objects without subject. The order itself, designed on the basis of stones qualified relatively to something else, has no place for the observer in his role as



subject, hence no place for man—if man, as subject, has a kind of being ‘in himself’ that is not merely relative to something else.<sup>6</sup>

Here the greatness of the natural sciences becomes manifest, together with the limitations inherent in this greatness.

The knowledge of the natural sciences is practical knowledge. They discover the obstinacy of objects as objects and prove their discoveries day by day by achievements. For these achievements it is absolutely irrelevant whether the known suchness of things reaches their reality as a reality in itself or only as a reality relative to others—provided it is reality relative to any possible observer, and the atoms, whatever they may be ‘in themselves’, are broken relative to any observer, whatever being broken may be in itself. This ‘in itself’ means nothing at all to the physicist as physicist. The greater the practical knowledge, the less relevant is all such ‘itself’. It finally becomes entirely meaningless. The physicist need no longer speak of reality or pretend that his knowledge reaches nature as she is in herself. Achievements alone matter.

However, until not long ago, in their enthusiasm over discoveries already made and in anticipation of still greater discoveries to come, the exact sciences assumed that their basic type of order—corresponding to a specific kind of mathematical equation—could encompass the whole of nature and her diversity. They absolutized the order as the order of nature herself. This dream was but a dream. The physicist was a naive realist. No physicist absolutizes his knowledge any longer. What we know is the reflection of a not yet known order of nature in the mirror of our concepts.<sup>7</sup> Now the physicist erects a fence around physics, defines the only reality he knows or desires to know as physical reality, and even confesses, as operationalist, that his concepts have a meaning and can be defined only in the context of his operations. In this way he protects physics against all speculative misuse of its knowledge. He recognizes his description of physical reality as relative to the generalized observer. The achievements remain—and they alone matter. These achievements are tremendous.



By erecting the fence the physicist recognizes boundaries to scientific knowledge. At present quite a few are trying this fence.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps the present humility will not last. It is inspired by the awareness of some contradictions to which any absolutization of the concepts used would lead, and by some unsolved puzzles concerning the relation between the so-called matter and the so-called field. Any apparent or real explanation of this relation would suggest to many that the fence be removed and the knowledge we possess be recognized as knowledge of the reality in itself—especially if a universal type of order swaying the microworld and underlying the known statistical regularities of the macroworld could be discovered.

The stone 'is'—independently of any observer. Science investigates its nature—relative to any possible observer. To know this nature is important. Even the magic man dies of cancer. Him too the bomb tears to pieces. The crude factuality asserts itself. A thing is just so and not otherwise—this is the last and the first experience of finite Man.

This obstinate nature of the thing relative to a generalized observer must have something to do with whatever the stone is in itself, though the regularity observed is only its projection in the mirror of the physical concepts. The regularity is astonishing; there must be some reason for it. It is not tautology; it is not implied in the definition of the concepts used, though hidden truisms sneak into some formulations. It cannot be deduced from the concepts; its reason does not lie in the construction of the mirror.<sup>9</sup>

Is science not continuously at work to alter and improve the mirror? Does not—at least in some respects—the order in the mirror become more and more orderly and comprehensive? Will science not be able to reach the reality itself, the stone as it is 'in itself'—at an anticipated end of physics?

The inquiry into nature will cling to this hope. It is made not only for the sake of practical achievements. We inquire into nature for the sake of knowledge. Achievements only confirm a theory. Whenever the application of the syntactical rules of a mathematical calculus enables the natural scientist



to draw inferences from observations already made to observations still to be made, the scientist regards a confirmation of these inferences as a confirmation of his assumption that the syntax of his calculus has something to do with the syntax of Nature herself; and rightly so, even if this 'having to do with' means only that the still unknown order of nature must contain a reason for the confirmation of these inferences. Hence physics will certainly again jump the fence by which for the time being it confines the kind of knowledge it pretends to have.

However, there is a fence that is not merely a product of a transient modesty. This final boundary has its reason in the relation of the observer to the observed. Hence, to guard against premature conclusions from anticipated future discoveries, it may be useful to formulate the conditions that must be fulfilled if physics, at an ideal end of its efforts, is to present the physical reality as the reality itself.

At this ideal end the language of physics will be perfect. In this language there will be no cleavage between anorganic and organic, lifeless and living, beings. Not that the beings that are now said to live—plants, animals, men—will be stones, lifeless 'mechanisms'; stones will be permitted to live—in their own modest way. The observer, the observed, the observation as occurrence, will belong to the same system and be described by the same concepts and subject to the same order: the observer, not as object of a second observation but as subject of the first; the observer in being a subject. The physicist of our day will deny, however, that such physics can be called physics. 'Nature' will be neither only the nature of the natural sciences<sup>10</sup> nor opposed to Reason, Mind, Spirit—as *das Andere des Geistes*.<sup>11</sup> Nature as the nature of nature will encompass man—man together with his 'Mind', the revolt of his blood and the sadness of his soul.

The mathematics of this science will be different from ours, in a manner now not even to be dreamed of. Its universal variables and their invariant relations will not be contingent upon one another, as they are now. They will be a closed system; the equivalents of present-day gravitation and electro-



dynamics will imply each other. We shall know that only together can they be real, and why. This knowledge will indicate that science is on the way to meet the syntax of 'reality in itself'—as the present contingency of our universal variables indicates that Science reaches only a 'being-for-others'.

This does not mean that the ideal physicist at the end of physics will be able to predict the future.<sup>12</sup> He may be able to tell us the limits of predictability and the conditions of its possibility. The correctness of prediction will no longer be the only confirmation. The inner consistency of the total picture of nature will give a place to both the necessity of the necessary and the contingency of the contingent.

Of course the physicist at the end of physics will no longer be compelled or inclined to pretend that his concepts have meaning only in the context of his operations. They will have a philosophical meaning which he will not disclaim.

The ideal end of physics is a mere construction. Even the perfect physicist may have to go among and mix with the ignorant human beings and their things, to learn in love and hate, misery and happiness, what the symbols of his perfect language 'really' mean.

However that may be, before that end of physics the physically real is not yet reality itself. The things are qualified in their being to others. This 'being-to-others' presupposes two things. Beings or entities that have such a 'being-to-others' must have a 'being in themselves' if they can be thought to have the power to insist stubbornly upon any such 'being-to-others'. This power the things of nature do have. Since, however, we cannot absolutize the concepts of physics, we cannot reach what the things are in themselves, though we must posit such a being in themselves as basis of their being relative to something else. Moreover, this 'something else', the 'subject', must have a being in itself to have the power of bestowing on others such a relative being. This power man does have. This 'being in itself'—himself as subject of observation—the physicist cannot reach.

Since man is the only being accessible to man that has such power—and not only occasionally and incidentally—the ques-



tion of reality has to be addressed to man, to man as subject. Man who asks the question is himself the reality to be questioned and thus carries the entire burden of the question. He cannot learn from the atom what he is, though in the conceptual mirror of physics he may entirely 'consist of atoms'.



## *Chapter 2*

# IMAGES OF MYTHOLOGY

**E**ACH SOCIETY answers the question 'What is man?' in terms of the world image of its own culture. The pseudoscientific answers of modern 'enlightened' societies pretend to be scientific; they too, however, are only answers of transient societies which translate alleged results of science into the naive language of their day.<sup>13</sup> Since they derive their claim to be scientific from mere semblance, I take them to be bad mythology and turn to mythology proper and its way of answering the question.

A society as a universe of care, work, and response sets up a picture of the world in which it lives. This world image differs in principle from the scheme of an order of the totality of things Science tries to explore. It is not an order of objects confronting the observer. It encompasses man as subject. The observer is part of the world; by its image man interprets himself, as well as he can, both his power as subject and his impotence as object. This world is the world of man. Man is the man of this world.

Ere fragments of scientific knowledge had invaded his world image, man saw himself, his nature, his life, and destiny reflected in this world image. He saw the order of the world manifested in himself. His own lot guided his interpretation of



the world; his interpretation of the world guided the interpretation of his own nature. Stones, plants, animals, and gods talked the language of man. As he imagined the order of his society reflected the order of the world, the order of the world seemed to guarantee him the norms of his society.

While this belief lasted, man thought he knew what he was. Asked, what is man? the Christian of the Middle Ages, the Egyptian of the early dynasties, the Greek of Homer's time would not have been embarrassed. He would have answered the question not with a definition indeed nor with concepts. He would have told a story—about the creation, about man as an image of God, about Adam's fall, and the like. The answer would have been an image, or perhaps many images, each an aspect of man's lot, inbetween animals and gods, akin to the animals, remote from the unapproachable gods, or near the gods and far above all animals—inbetween good and evil, happiness and misery, pride and humility—Niobe or Prometheus, Oedipus or Achilles.

Stories that are images or images that are stories are many. A society builds up a vast realm of such images; in them it answers the question, 'What is man?'. It lives in these images.

We say, they are 'merely' images, 'merely' stories. But what does this 'merely' mean? To the scientific man it means that they are images of man's phantasy, of illusion and superstition. They have no claim on scientific truth.<sup>14</sup> The 'merely' negates everything that is relevant to science. To be sure, they do not claim to have any part in scientific truth.

To prescientific man the 'merely' has no identifiable meaning. A society that lives in such images of world and man does not recognize that these images are merely images. As long as they are images of the one world they know, in them and only in them does the 'res itself' become manifest. Since men hang on to the uniqueness of their world images they sometimes fight bloody wars for them; and not only because all kinds of interest are invested in these images. These images answer man's question; they guide the universe of response, link the past to the future of a society, and perhaps to what is dearest to man. This world is the world of this society. Only



when different societies, in contact with one another, are compelled by the pressure of circumstances to learn tolerance do they admit that there may be different images of the same 'reality'. Now only does the 'merely' get a definite meaning. Yet even then these images, though images, are not merely images. When they have finally become mere images, they have lost their power: the cruel image of the birth from chaos of the oldest gods in Hesiod's theogony <sup>15</sup> had power over the Greeks for centuries after Hesiod, whereas for us it is only an image we admire as poetry. Images too command and ban.

Whatever the meaning of this loosely used 'merely', what is the 'truth' of such images? Truth about what?

In asking such a question we should not start from the idea of a dispute between scientific and mythological truth. The different images may compete with each other for 'truth'. Should we assume that all are equally true or equally false? Or each true for the believer alone? Only if there is a meaning of 'truth' with respect to which some images can claim to be more true than others can mythological truth, supported by this meaning, enter a contest for truth with other kinds of 'truth'.

The mythological answers to the question, 'What is man?' come to be, are revised, and pass away with the cosmic images of the societies that erect, modify, and destroy these images of man. Hence their validity and claim on truth seem to be restricted to the particular society whose images they are.

It seems so—on the surface. As images they are images of something. Any 'truth' of an image has two 'elements': the reality of that something of which the image is an image and the manner in which it is an image and makes more or less visible more or less of that reality. Without the first element the image would be an image only of a semblance, that is, of something that seems to be real but is not; without the second element an image is not an image. In many a so-called image nothing, not even a semblance, becomes visible appearance. If an image is genuine or an image in the emphatic sense of the word, its truth can outlive the society that created it,



though the social recognition of its claim on truth may perish with the society.

These images are statements in different languages. In terms of the cosmic images of his society man conceives his humanity in images that can be more or less narrow or wide, poor or rich, dim or clear. The images can be more or less transparent. This transparence is twofold. A piece of human life becomes more or less visible in a mythical story, in a half-historical or historical report of events and actions. This particular piece of a particular human life—the story of Philoctetes, David, or Odysseus—is again more or less transparent, a representation or a manifestation of a more general ‘something’—human life, the lot of man, *la condition humaine*, man’s ‘existence.’ It is a partial aspect; in this partial aspect the whole of which it is an aspect is more or less co-present. Neither the different images of man nor the images of the world in whose terms the images of man are expressed are equal in rank. All present talk notwithstanding, this rank is not merely a matter of someone’s taste, pleasure, or opinion.<sup>16</sup>

Thus the story of Job’s patience is transparent in two ways, in each to the utmost. The particular man becomes visible in the narrative as a particular man in the particularity of his destiny. In this particularity something that is greater becomes manifest, something that is not merely this Jew and this God and this destiny, but man in his miserable existence. Co-present in, and intertwined with, one another are the many modes of being as human possibilities, reaching far beyond the history of the Jewish people and its God, or the world of a transient society—image of a truth about man whose validity is not dependent upon the language in which it is expressed but is valid for Jew, Greek, and Chinese, patient or impatient, pious or impious man. Hence, this image as an image of man’s being remained powerful long after the fall of the society in which it came to be.

In the last song of the *Iliad* old Priam entreats young Achilles to surrender Hector’s body. Homer does not just tell us something about Priam and Achilles, the particular beings, or about old age and youth in general. He sets up before our



eyes an image of grief and love, friendship and hate, the city that still flourishes, man's headstrong mind, his wrath and death, all this and much more, entwined together. That perhaps Troy never existed and that the gods certainly did not inhabit Mount Olympus do not impair the image and its truth. Its truth is truthfulness—man facing honestly the whole of life, which in its concords and discords is the lot of man. This honesty is what the Apollo of Delphi commands in his "Know thyself"; that is, know that you are a man, not a god.

Homer and the author of the Book of Job are great poets. The myth needs great poets who in all cases are individual men. Of truth in poetry we are aware, though we do not pay attention to it in our disputes over the 'meaning of truth'. We know quite well that the works of great poets are truer than those of minor ones, though the stories of both are fiction. We know even that this kind of truth is the secret of their greatness and the reason they are remembered.

A truth of this kind is already in the myth itself. A thousand times richer is the mythology of the Hellenes than that of the Normans. Very different in truth are the various interpretations of man's being the cosmic image of the Christian faith has inspired. In some of our pseudoscientific answers to the question, 'What is man?' we are not aware how meager and empty is even the kind of truth these answers pretend to have.

If an image can be taken to be a proposition, the proposition is neither true nor false in the sense of being a correct or incorrect statement of fact. It is true by virtue of a certain reality-content of which the image is an image.

The truth of an image is not the truth of a proposition. The truth of some images reaches far beyond the truth of most propositions. It is important that the peoples of the earth possess such images and through them be able to understand and recognize one another as human beings across all the diversity of their historical worlds. It is more important than agreement about the propositions of chemistry. This the modern educator forgets when he replaces the great poetry by the latest textbook on the popularized science of his age.



Modern man is reluctant to concede to such images any truth that could outlive the society of their origin. Some try to define truth by effectiveness. A few of these images became historical forces and as ideas determined the actions of a society. But the lies about man are historically more effective than any truth. The most effective of these images are wishes. Some are images of what man should be or wishes to be in some future, not of what he is. Man may in some ages under the impact of such images make an effort to become what he thinks he should be or even imagine that he already is what he should be. Others assume that such an image as an image of the man of a particular age could have some truth only about this particular man—Homer about the Greeks of the eighth century B.C., Shakespeare about the English of his time. But this opinion crumbles in any concrete case. However different the societies and ages, the better the images the deeper they reach into the fundamental context of man's being—about which Homer and Shakespeare agree—beyond all the differences of the things, ideas, norms, and cosmic images in whose language they formed their images.

The 'universal' or the fundamental context of 'life', or whatever we agree to call that of which these images are images, is not property of an historical society. Historical research is altogether too ready to assume that by talking about himself man becomes what he says he is. Since man uses words more apt to conceal than to reveal, the human reality does not change or at least changes more slowly and within narrower limits than man's way of talking about himself. Hence the discord between man's words about himself and his reality continuously changes in history and is narrower in one age, wider in another.

Since in speaking about images and their possible truth I shall probably be misunderstood, I give still another simple example. The Homer of the *Odyssey* has Hermes, at the command of Zeus, fly to Calypso's Island to tell her to detain Odysseus no longer. Hermes, jumping down from Mt. Olympus, flies without effort over the stormy sea, like a sea gull that, barely touching the crest of the waves, catches fish. The



image is clear and bright. Of what is it an image? Only of Hermes and the gods, the θεῶν ζῶντες—who 'live in ease'? When, soon afterward, Odysseus tries to cross the raging sea on a clumsy raft which breaks, the image of the ease of Hermes' flight becomes an image of man's lot. Men do not live in perfect ease, though they would like to; they do not fly over the crest of the waves and catch fish. Even we might be able to see that perhaps the whole Olympus and the immortal and ageless gods, whose life is play and ease, are in their turn images in which man, the awkward earth-bound being, comes to understand himself. Homer leaves no doubt whatever that in all his gods, nymphs, fairy tales, the human reality alone matters—nothing else. He who is incredulous should reread his Homer and accompany Odysseus from nymph to nymph to the shades of the dead.

Homer's truth is unpretentious. It is entirely independent of the approval of scientific man. It does not depend upon the existence of a society that believes in the cosmic image of Homer. This cosmic image is but the language in which Homer expresses his truth. The truth of images that really are images endows even this language, that is, the cosmic images, with a kind of truth. In a certain sense they are true by virtue of the images of the human reality they make possible. Hence it may be that the truth of the human images does not rest upon the truth of the cosmic images; on the contrary, cosmic images borrow their truth from the truth of the human reality they are able to express.

The quarrel about 'truth' between science and mythology is a quarrel about the claim on a sacred word. Neither the realities nor the words of the two sides meet. Nevertheless, again and again the question arises and demands an answer: of what are these images images? and as images of something can they claim a kind of truth—beyond the society whose images they are?



### *Chapter 3*

## THE PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM: REALITY AND CONCRETENESS

THE SCIENTIFIC, pseudoscientific, mythological answers are, each in its own way, cosmological answers. Man identifies himself by his place in a cosmos of all the multiple beings in space and time. These answers spring from the natural way of thinking of a finite being that as a being among beings in a world of many beings forever presupposes, designs, discovers, or assumes such an order.

The order man thinks he knows, however, may not be the order of reality itself. In the conceptual scheme of the anonymous observer of the exact sciences man does not recognize himself as subject. The order of the world societies set up as their world does not stand still. Man himself ever again alters their design. Hence man begins to mistrust the basis of all these answers. In this doubt philosophy becomes philosophy. The word philosophy is used in many senses. Words suffer silently. Man discovers he still does not know what he is. Yet he 'is'. Hence he puts, before the question of 'what', the meaning of the 'is' as the fundamental question of all philosophy. The meaning of 'is' is not simply and as a matter of



course the mere belonging to an order of the Many in time and space that as many can be or are perceived by an observer.

At present the dubious meaning of 'is' presents itself as the problem of 'reality'. These inquiries indicate as they proceed that to be real means to be 'concrete'. They search for the realness of reality in that something—whatever it is—by which the concrete is concrete. *Concretum*, from *concrecere*, means 'grown together'.<sup>17</sup>

In customary thinking concrete is opposed to abstract as the particular of the individual case to the general, genus, species, class, this man here to the class man. In this sense we may say we call the particular man here and now 'concrete', since the properties he has as a member of the class are tied to many others that belong to him, this particular man. General man we call abstract since we 'abstract from' or disregard these properties. It is only natural that we grant to the particular a claim to be called real since we all know that we cannot eat the general apple or ride on the concept of a horse but need for eating and riding a particular apple and a particular horse. Yet in this manner of speaking the general properties of the class are not 'grown together' with the particular properties of the single member of the class.<sup>18</sup>

Many are unaware of another sense of concrete opposed to an abstraction of a different kind. Only this second sense, in conjunction with the first, justifies the claim of the concrete to be 'really real'.

In this second sense a particular thing or fact, a this one here and now, though 'concrete' in the first sense, is still an abstraction, despite all particular properties heaped together, if and as far as we disregard the 'context' in which it stands. This context, however, is not arbitrary; it is a definite context. In this sense the price of wheat at a certain place and time would be an abstraction, were it nothing but a price in a cosmos of prices. Such a price and such a cosmos of prices is not a real fact but an artifact of the observer, product of an artificial isolation. It is not yet price. There is no such thing. It becomes price and concrete in the context of miserable or joyful men who buy and sell. Hence, to be concrete means



here to be grown together with all the other elements of a context we call life. In this context alone are prices prices.

When physicists say the point of physical reality is to be characterized by a group of numbers, some of which designate its place in space and time, others the values of the variables of the gravitational, still others those of the electrodynamic field, the point in space, or in an only gravitational or only electrodynamic field would in this second sense of concrete and abstract be an abstraction, since the isolation of some of these variables disregards the context of the 'physically real' in which these variables are concrete—'grown together'. The physicist, to remind himself of this abstraction, should in his calculation carry along all these variables even if they are zero though these zeros are totally irrelevant for the purposes of his present reasoning. This would not give the physicist any difficulty; his worry is that the variables of gravitation and electrodynamics, which describe the physically real, are not really 'grown together'—they are incidental to each other.<sup>19</sup>

It seems that *concrescere* was originally intended to mean more than simply bringing together different properties. Plato, in his *Meno*, says: 'the whole of nature is born together.'<sup>20</sup> What he here calls *physis* is not, as nature is to us, the totality of all things or events extended in space and time. It is the nature of nature and includes man, together with his 'soul' and his 'mind'. Aristotle calls the substance that is a compound of matter and form a *synholon*, which Latin translators translate *concretum*.

The two senses of 'concrete' and 'abstract' spring from different, even opposite, points of view: in the first, in which the particular is called concrete and the universal abstract, we start from the assumption that reality is a multiplicity of given entities to be ordered in classes and subclasses; in the second, we assume the unity of a context whose constituent elements are 'grown together' and can subsist only together and with respect to one another, not alone—and by the way, not even in thought.

The 'concrete' can claim to be called real in an emphatic



sense of the word 'real' if and only if it is concrete in both senses: as a particular of the many in its particularity and in the context in which its elements are grown together into an undissolvable unity. I call the first sense of concrete the 'extensive', the second sense the 'intensive'. In the first sense concrete means the particular, abstract the general. In the second sense the abstract is the isolated element divorced from the contextual unity, concrete the contextual unity co-present in each of its single elements. In the emphatic sense of the 'concretely concrete' or the 'really real' the first and the second senses too are grown together: it is a particular reality among the many, an *ens* here and now, viewed or understood in the inner density of its *esse*.

Opposed to this twofold concretion is a twofold abstraction. Most of our universals are classes of isolated elements. The 'inner density' of the twofold concrete, however, is the actual experience of man. The assumptions we make before beginning to think about reality prevent us from discovering it.

Man, a particular this one here and now, an *ens* among the many *entia*, concrete in the first sense, experiences the concretion of the second sense in the inner density of what in the present moment is called 'existence' inbetween his misery and his joy, his ignorance and his knowledge, his memory and expectation, inbetween his many passions and his reason. In this inner density much more is present than the visibly given. The context we call Life is present; in this context only is the single datum what it 'is'.

Though we are always, wittingly or unwittingly, aware of this context, knowing, saying, defining, or formulating it is difficult. We call it Life and go astray. 'Life' has become a subject matter of a particular science which deals with some beings that have life in an order of the Many, designed on the so much simpler basis of the lifeless, though in this manner of thinking life as life slips out of our fingers.

Whenever, forgetting our matters of course, we ponder this context in which life is alive, a kind of intensive meaning creeps into the 'is'. This context does not interrelate the data



or beings in a world of the many we absolutize as objective; it links 'momenta', the constituent elements of an occurrence in which the things and the data of the order of the Many become what they mean in this occurrence by virtue of the roles they play or the functions they have. This context is unity of a fabric. When we determine the things by their meanings, roles, or functions in the occurrence of life, we give priority to this unity. The single momentum we distinguish, or the thread of the fabric, cannot be divorced from the unity, lest it become nothing. In each momentum or each thread that for the moment is visible, the whole context or fabric inheres, whether visible or hidden. What is apparently absent is present as absence.

Hence we have to search first of all for the momenta or elements or threads that are tied together in the intensive sense of the 'is', and together constitute the inner density of the reality we experience as 'life'.

The quest for the concreteness of the concrete has a 'pathos' of its own. This pathos may even be passionate enough to differentiate the effort of this quest from others by the name concretism—if all such things must have names. But the name is only a name for a long and difficult way of asking a question.

Let me try to say in another way what I mean by the concrete being grown together. When Plato speaks about the soul—even when he seems to speak about the state he is speaking about the soul—he uses the word 'inbetween' *μεταξύ*. The soul is 'inbetween'. This inbetween is not simply our usual inbetween of a thing which in the order of position in time and space is inbetween two other things, now these, now those, that may have nothing to do with it. Plato's inbetween has an emphatic sense. The termini between which the soul is said to be are grown together in the soul as momenta of its Being. The inbetween is inside the soul. Inbetween knowledge and ignorance is philosophy; inbetween riches and poverty is love. Between God and Man the daimon mediates, carrying to and fro prayers and commands. Bound in one by the power of the daimon—*ἐν ἐνὶ δεδέσμενον*—are all things.<sup>21</sup> The logical



meaning of this inbetween we lose when we start from the order of the Many. Inbetween many such inbetweens man is concrete.

It should be clear that this reality, articulated in its two-fold concreteness, is not the reality given to an observer outside reality. Nor is it the reality of a subject that, apart from its objects, is posited as one of the many and isolated. It is the reality of the subject together with its objects, of the objects together with the subject whose objects they are. It is the reality seen from inside, not from outside, in the "mortal coil"<sup>22</sup> of concords and discords in which the real is real and the concrete concrete.

If, instead of letting an anonymous observer of science usurp the throne of the deity outside the world, and contemplating and correlating the many data in time and space, we think of an all-knowing God looking down at the reality, even this God would have to seek the reality in the context whose constituent elements are grown together in each single thing—from the beginning and of necessity.



## *Chapter 4*

# ABSTRACT AND CONCRETE TIME

**T**'IME' TOO—its nature being an old puzzle—shows the two-fold meaning of 'is' to a thinking that craves concreteness. To many, time is 'objective' Time; it orders chronologically the events in the universe; to others, it is subjective time, that is, the time-structure of subjectivity in which the 'momenta' of time are hooked into one another in a structural unity. But objective as well as subjective time, each posited separately, are abstractions. In each other only are they concrete time in its full reality.

To a thinking that aims at the order of the Many, time files births and deaths of all men and animals in a single series and gives to each event a place before, after, and between others. For a thinking that aims at the intensive concreteness of man's 'being in time', time as the time-structure of the subject is the Time of time-consciousness—man in the succession of his fleeing now seems to be still what he is no longer and already what he is not yet, reaches back and ahead of himself as time pushes him on.

Time, however, is neither only the one nor only the other, but both, each with respect to the other.

To exact science, time is one dimension of an  $n$ -dimensional manifold. As the first four dimensions are interpreted as



'space-time', time is the fourth dimension. Since the specific nature of this fourth dimension differs from that of the three dimensions of space, time becomes a problem.

This objective time measures one movement and is measured by another movement. But since 'duration' is extension of a sameness in time, movement is extension of a difference. It does not yet 'move'. Movement too becomes a problem.<sup>23</sup>

The 'now' as the present moment, divides the dimension we call time into two halves we call past and future. Time is an infinite series of now-points; the points are distinguishable from one another only by their relative positions. They have no duration. The present has no being; it is only a dividing line.

Yet there is a peculiar now: the presently present now. This now marches relentlessly on, in one direction only; it does not stand still, nor does it turn back. But this now marches only as the line that separates the future from the past. Even for science this particular distinction of the present now needs the observer. The now is the point of observation. Only now can it be made, has it ever been made, and will it always be made. The observer is a finite being, fettered to time. To God each now is ever present—his 'eternity' is *aeterna praesentia*. Science posits the time-fettered observer outside the world he observes in a presently present now.

As long as the physicist refrains from any speculation concerning reality, does not absolutize the physical system 'world', and orders only the observable, he need not be aware of any awkward difficulties. He takes the role of the presently present now and its stubborn one-way march from the naive world of his daily life and cheerfully interferes, in a presently present now, in the system he observes. He is concerned only with the physical reality of the anonymous observer.

The time of the human observer is no longer a mere order of relative positions. This order is not yet time. Time, to be time, needs the time of the subject who observes and interferes. As time of the subject only, time as dimension overcomes the empty abstraction of a mere order of positions. In the subject that has a 'being-in-itself', in which every now



interknits interlaced momenta, time becomes real time, the now a real now, and movement real movement.

In this time of the subject, past, present, and future are modes of being, not stretches of a time dimension. Modes of being are referred to one another in a contextual unity; past and future are past and future to a present, the present is present inbetween a past and a future. The past is decided, beyond action or observation; the future undecided, approaching decision; the present is the moment of decision. The movement is movement, the 'event' event, by linking together and referring to one another a whence and a whither. The now is no longer a mere dividing line but a greater now<sup>24</sup> still in the shadow or the light of the past and already in the shadow or the light of the future now.

Since this time-structure, though continued in every moment of life, seems to become accessible to man's reflective thinking only in the analysis of his time-consciousness, the time of the subject is interpreted as the time of man's consciousness, whereas the 'objective' time of the more chronological order of the Many is conceived without any equivalent of a greater now or any retention and anticipation. Yet this power of retention and anticipation is not external to time, brought in and added to the nature of time by something called consciousness or mind; rather it has been removed from time in the course of the objectivation of time as a mere dimension—by a process of abstraction. Hence it need not be consciousness that makes possible retention and anticipation, but retention and anticipation as implied in the structure of real Time that make possible the retention and anticipation of human consciousness. In other words, the structure of time is presupposed in time consciousness. Consciousness is not the precondition of the time structure though it may be the precondition of its discovery in man's reflective thinking.

The threefold nature of the present in Augustine as presence of the past, memory; presence of the present, 'contuition'; presence of the future, expectation, seems to presuppose a conscious mind. It may be, however, that we do not need



the kind of memory and expectation that are phenomena of consciousness. There is perhaps a meaning of remembering and expecting in which the now itself, in an equivalent of retention and anticipation, remembers and expects. Such a possibility we exclude indeed by definition if we conceive of time as a series of now-points and define the continuum as infinite density of such a series, each thinkable interval between two points approaching zero as its limit.

In the inner density of a flowing time—the continuum being not only the limit of a discretum of smaller and smaller intervals—the present now, assumed to be without duration, is forever a now that, just now coming from the future, has pushed a now that has just now been present into the past as it is again just now being pushed, yea has already been pushed, into the past by a next now. The series may not at all ‘consist of’ such nows. The nows are nows only in the unity of their series. The now approaches, pushes out a present now, and takes over that retention and anticipation in which alone as a present now it is not only a dividing line. These nows are not separated and separable units; they are what they are in the inseparable unity of their flux, reaching back or retaining, reaching forward or anticipating, hooked in one another, and carrying with them the entire ‘structure of time’.

If in modern physics the ‘event’ becomes the ultimate unit, replacing the last shadow of ‘substance’, we should admit that even this event is an event only by pointing to a whence and a whither it connects. Even the events, for the time being the smallest and most modern units, need this ‘connecting’, lest ‘event’ mean nothing but an abstraction of the observer.

Man may or may not, in an ideal physics of the future, learn from the events at the basis of physics what time is. Until then man will be aware of the inner density of time only in the mirror of his own ‘being in time’, remembering and expecting, clutching at the past as it vanishes, hurrying ahead to meet the approaching future, always being snatched away from himself yet always subsisting in himself, acting and deciding in fear and want, desire and hope, seizing and



missing opportunities, amid things that move too quickly or too slowly, in the 'suddenly' <sup>25</sup> of change, in the instant of a moment that is no longer, forever 'in time', moving toward, away from, something, trying in vain to retard or to quicken its pace, fettered to its unrelenting step.

In man's endeavors to design a scheme of his world and to order the many things, time orders positions before and after. The time of the objects he orders becomes objective time measured by the movement of the stars. Man clings to this concept of time; he needs it.

Yet, when he is not content to order the many in their succession he becomes aware of another 'logos' in the 'nature' of time which any single *ens*, be it 'substance' or event, needs to be real. Thus there are not two times, the one 'objective', the other 'subjective'. There is only one time, looked at under two aspects, each of which, for itself alone, is abstraction. The subject without object, the object without subject, are abstractions too.

In the complete concreteness of time the two aspects are 'grown together'. Each needs the other to reach the realness of reality. Without the other, the time of neither aspect can 'be'. The inner time can unfold the density of its context only in the before-after of the nows that succeed one another in the time of the cosmos—the series of nows needs the density of the inner time lest the nows be without any content that could be real. 'Time' is here but an example for the twofold meaning of concreteness, which holds also for the structure of concrete space, as well as for all other truly fundamental concepts that can pretend to be more than categories of speech and thought and to articulate the real in its reality.

Space too is not simply an order of relative positions of the contemporaneous. There is a structure of space interrelating in a unity different ways of 'being in space'. The momenta of this structure too are hooked into and accompany one another: in, with, opposite, remote and near, full and empty. Space too must be articulated in modes of being in space, as man, being in himself, is in something other than he himself—



forever and of necessity. Man's being in space can no more be separated from his being in time, than can the time and the space of physics. As beings that are in time we are in space. Any inquiry into the structure of this 'inner' space-time, however, is a long endeavor of a difficult and inverted way of thinking,<sup>26</sup> far beyond the scope of this inquiry.<sup>27</sup>



## Chapter 5

### THE TWO MEANINGS OF 'IS':

#### *ESSE AND ENS*

THE ARTICULATION of concreteness leads to a twofold meaning of 'is'. Two senses of 'is' are distinguished. Each is meaningful only with respect to the other. Neither by itself reaches the realness of reality.

In the great images of man's *esse* the two senses of 'is' permeate each other. Hence their unshakable truth, challenged though it is again and again. Such an image seems to be only a particular aspect of a particular mode of being in a unique and transient historical world but its unrepeatable particularity can be a manifestation of the immutable fabric of human reality.

To the endless effort called philosophy the thesis of the two senses of 'is' and their interrelations is not an end; it is the beginning of a beginning. I shall try to indicate at least the philosophical position of such a beginning. I cannot do it, however, by simply referring to a philosophical tradition. The tradition in which this thesis lives is partly forgotten, partly misunderstood.

The distinction of two meanings of 'is' is implied in the controversy between the 'One' and the 'Many' in pre-Socratic



philosophy. Blurred already by Aristotle, it is still used and misused in other senses and to other purposes. It is the distinction between *esse* and *ens* or *entia* in Latin, *être* or *l'étant* (*les êtres*) in French, *Sein* and *Seiendes* in German. Those are dangerous words. Not because they are so general as to be devoid of meaning but because in the mind of most people they carry the burden of a long and confused history in which man has tried to understand his finite 'existence' through the infinite God of revelation.<sup>28</sup>

The sense in which I use these dangerous words has nothing to do with the history of their use in the Arabic, Jewish, or Christian philosophy of the Middle Ages. Nor has it anything to do with the controversy between *existentia* and *essentia*, terms whose meanings presuppose Aristotle's doctrine of substance. I take the liberty of using these terms in a sense that is not the sense of any philosophy since Plato's later dialogues.

In the sense in which I use these terms, *esse* and *ens*, distinguish two logoi, the logos of the One and the logos of the Many.<sup>29</sup> Two aspects are confronted. In each the 'is' has a different sense. The logos of the One, *esse*, articulates a unity in its inherent differences. The logos of the Many orders a pregiven manyness—*entia*, beings, entities, things, or whatever else—in classes, relations, correlations of various kinds.

The predicates—properties, traits, features—that belong to the logos of the One, whose joints they articulate, are ontological; those of the Many are ontic. When they order the cosmos of the Many we call world, ontic predicates are cosmological predicates.

The two logoi are distinguished, not separated. They need each other: *esse*—Being, to be—is only as *esse* of an *ens*—a being—in a world of many *entia*, beings. An *ens* 'is' or has Being only by virtue of *esse*. Only in the Many 'is' the One; only through the One 'are' the Many.

In the history of Man these empty abstractions become concrete, provided the observer of history remains a living human being, acting and being acted upon in history. All change of human things in history is of two kinds. In the one occurs the other. In the one the beings change—a man, thing,



society, religion emerges and passes way. This is the change of the many in space and time, the historical entities pushing and shoving one another aside. In change of this kind this happy man or people becomes miserable, that miserable man happy, though misery remains misery, happiness happiness.

Whereas the *entia*, τὰ ὄντα of the order of the Many change, the λόγος τοῦ ὄντος remains. "The One remains, the Many change and pass."<sup>30</sup> However, in this change of the Many the *esse* of this particular man who happens to be thrown from his half happiness into a complete misery also changes. Yet this *esse* of a particular *ens* in a particular historical situation is a mode of being, *modus essendi*, a particular aspect of the one fabric that as one and the same silently accompanies the relentless change, and alters only the aspect in which it reveals and conceals itself as one and the same. The one *esse* moves the *modi essendi* back and forth within the fabric of the One, and history puts these alternating modes of being into ever varying clothes. Each of these *modi essendi*, whatever the historical dress, carries the whole of the fabric, the logos of the One. These *modi essendi* are not different *entia* of the order of the Many. All so-called dialectic is dialectic of Being, not of beings, *essendi*, not *entium*. It stems from the co-presence of the whole of the structure of *esse* in each *modus essendi* of an *ens*. Only the *modi essendi*, not the many *entia*, are to one another the one-to-the-other. Hence dialectic is not yet a dialectic of the historical process in which empires perish and societies disintegrate.<sup>31</sup> The two logoi are not contradictory.<sup>32</sup> Only men, positing the one or the other as the only one, fight one another with ever new words without result.

The relation between *esse* and *entia* corresponds to the relation between the axiomatic system of space and the single figure in a geometry of reality thought of as perfect, or in a 'world geometry' at the end of mathematical physics, provided the axiomatic system of space is conceived of as a whole whose axioms are not set side by side but imply one another in the unity of a whole. In this case the axiomatic system is present as a whole in each figure. To space the figure owes



its being a figure; only in the figure is space 'real'. As space is nothing without a figure, any figure nothing without space, so Being as *esse* is nothing without beings, *entia*; *entia* are nothing without *esse*.

In such a world-geometry space is the space of all spaces, the only one, necessary in itself; it is not a space among other spaces. Its axioms are the basis of all possible spaces; hence, like the topological axioms of our projective geometry, they are present in each figure of any Euclidean or non-Euclidean space, whatever its particular metrical axioms. Thus Being, *esse*, is *esse* of all beings, *entia*, that have a being in themselves and not only with respect to something else—*esse* of Man, as of all other beings that are. Through its logos, all beings are kin.

The 'fabric of *esse*' stands in the same relation to the 'cosmos' or the world as the axiomatic system of space to a total compound of figures, on the great world-board designed, modified, erased. The single figure, this *ens* here and now or the totality of all the *entia* in this world of ours, need not be derivable from the axioms of such a space of all spaces—being of necessity just such and not otherwise. The *entia*, though chained to the frame of *esse*, could be ontologically contingent, though as *entia* they may be conditioned by other *entia* and dependent upon the constellation of *entia*, the past, or this cosmos of ours. A deity we conceive of as creator of the world could have created a different world and might have created countless other worlds, yet even this almighty deity could not have created *esse* itself as a different *esse*.

This *esse*—or Being writ large—is not the *esse* of the history of philosophy, not the thinkable or the possible, not the empty most general notion that admits no further predicates. It is that τὸ ὄν of early Greek philosophy into which Aristotle in his first philosophy proposes to inquire, though he deviates early in his scrutiny from the original meaning of his question into cosmology. It is the ὄν that Plato in his later dialogues tries to articulate in hints given by logical analysis and in mythical images. It is the question asked by the greatest philo-



sophical figures before Socrates and not only by Parmenides, though he was the first to use the word 'Being' in a philosophical sense.

If this is the case, why use this dangerous term rather than *physis* or nature, a term less suspected of theological connotations? 'Nature' too entails equivalents of the two meanings of 'is' and suggests their distinction. Already at the beginning of philosophical inquiry *physis* on the one hand is proclaimed to be one—ἡ τῶν ὄντων φύσις—and is, according to an expression of Plato, πᾶσα συγγενής, born together. On the other hand, every natural being has a 'physis' of its own. Though words do not matter and we may wisely distrust any philosophy whose meaning is chained to a highly technical language and not translatable into any other, the term nature is exposed to misunderstanding no less dangerous than the term Being. In our loose usage 'nature' as the subject matter of natural science is opposed here to history and 'culture', there to 'mind'. In the course of the question I dare ask, 'culture', even the 'mind', is nature throughout and the nature of natural science is no less 'historical' than the history of man is 'natural'.

The geometrical simile, I admit, seems to expose the distinction of *esse* and *entia* to being misunderstood as distinguishing the possible from the real. Nothing of that kind is intended. *Esse* and *ens* are both real, each through and with respect to the other. In the full particularity of a concrete *ens* both 'logoi' are real—and only by virtue of their communion is the real really real. The geometrical simile as such pertains to the relation between *esse* and *ens* or between the structure of the space and the single figure. Both are part of the geometrical reality. To the physicist who thinks of his physical reality in geometrical terms the laws of electricity are as much part of the physical reality as the data of a particular electrodynamic field. The problem of the relation between the possible and the real remains outside the simile.<sup>33</sup>

We do not know, however, this geometry of Being. We are not even certain whether we can know it in its inner



necessity. The laws of nature presuppose such a geometry, though those laws the anonymous observer can reach are not yet its axioms. Our reason does not look through even man's *esse*, that is, through the specific 'metrical' axioms of the particular variation of space which, on the basis of the space of all spaces, govern the human figures.



## Chapter 6

# THE ONTOLOGICAL AND THE COSMOLOGICAL QUESTION

IF MAN, entangled in the sheer quantity of his confused knowledge, real or apparent, were to search for such a geometry of Being as something worth knowing, instead of denying that there could be such a geometry, he would soon discover that he can put the question to nothing save himself. An all-knowing god might know even the *esse* of stones. To man the stone is knowable only in its being to others. Only the men in the city, not the trees before the gates, answer Socrates' question.<sup>31</sup> The *esse* of *entia* is knowable to man only in man. Only he can ask the question; only to himself can he put it. In him alone does the question arise, and even in him only sometimes: when the order of his world breaks up or the infinite god turns his back; then, however, imperiously, as the hard, inescapable, indubitable 'I am', ever again astonishing beyond measure.

But is not Man only one being among other innumerable beings of all kinds—beasts, and bushes, and a particular one indeed, unique—the most improbable case in that infinite diversity of countless formations which struggle to be, succeed and fail, emerge and submerge again?



Certainly. Yet our speaking and thinking about man as man, his nature, his species, his εἶδος, his *essentia* is dominated from the beginning by the question of the 'Many' and their order. Under this aspect all our answers are given. Every and any *ens* is an *esse* among many *entia*. Its place in the order of the Many determines what it is—a man, not a laurel tree. This is the natural way of thinking. How could it be otherwise? In a world of the Many man must act and find his place and way of living as one of the Many. All variability of the species notwithstanding, man goes on, as in Aristotle's time, "to beget a man, not a dog or a horse"—as a distinct nature of his own. Evolution or not, that is still our first and most insistent experience.

Thus we understand how the question of *essentia* could prevail over the question of *esse*—and that *esse* as *ens* finally became a bare generality, devoid of content, not susceptible to further predications—a name for a general something that is not yet anything and hence nothing. However, the answers to the question of the *essentia* of man happen to remain strangely unessential if guided by the aspect of the Many and aimed at a definition *per genus proximum atque differentiam specificam*. How could we expect that the most essential thing about man is the difference of the species man from the genus mammal whose nature we know little—unless we deduce from our definition of essence that this difference is the most essential?

The aspect of the Many by itself may not reach what is 'essential' in an essence. Perhaps that *esse* by virtue of which all *entia* are *entia* is not at all an empty generality; perhaps 'nature' is not a multiplicity of beings having different natures; there may be a nature of all natures, that is, a *physis* of all beings co-present in every and any being qua being, manifest or hidden, source or root of what is 'essential' in an *essentia*, not order of the Many but texture of the One.

Starting from the order of the Many we conceive of the nature of Man in the way of a general concept, a class determined by some properties; some beings in the totality of all beings we call the world are members of this class and



called human. This notion, though indispensable for our concern with the diversity of the many things, leaves it to us to ask and answer the question, what is it that makes this class of beings a 'natural' class?

In terms of that geometrical simile the notion of general man corresponds to a class of figures, that is, triangles, characterized by some properties and distinguished by them from all other figures in geometrical space. Under the 'aspect of the One' the notion of man as a particular being has a different meaning. Here the conception of human nature demands to be understood as unity of a context or fabric in which the constituent elements entail one another and only together are what they are.

The axioms of an axiomatic system define the concepts occurring in that system by implicit definition. This conception of human nature, dominated by the logos of the One, corresponds in that geometrical simile not to a class of figures but to one of those specific geometrical spaces that, like Euclidean space, are space, not figure. Some specific 'metrical' axioms constitute the specificness of Euclidean space on the basis of the topological space, that is, the space of all spaces, preserving and blending with its unity. The axioms of Euclidean space have been understood as constituting a unity before the possibility of constructing non-Euclidean spaces was discovered.

The geometrical simile can only illustrate, and even its power to illustrate is limited. But whatever these limits, 'human nature', which under the aspect of the Many means a nature among natures, a class of beings among other classes, means under the aspect of the One a manifestation of the 'nature of nature', of that *esse* whose contextual unity accompanies all *entia* or beings—eternal necessity, guiltless and not in need of any justification.

That *esse*, however, or that 'nature of nature' man can reach only in man. Even here it is hidden—behind other half-hidden things. At this nature of nature philosophy aims; it is to man that it puts the question.

Though the thesis I am trying to outline aims at an on-



tology, I am aware that as an ontology of man it would not be fundamental; as fundamental ontology it would not be only an ontology of man, neither of present-day nor any other man, nor even of the entire breadth of man's nature, but also of laurel trees, fish, and birds, that is, it should reach what in all beings is 'fundamental'.

The inner 'pathos' of the ontological question tends to cross all boundaries. Modesty restricts the question to Man; even here it is immodest enough and after a few steps may face boundaries it cannot cross.

From two sides we can at least try to come nearer such a 'geometry of Being': first from above, by the way of inquiry Plato in his later dialogues called 'dialectic' or the way of philosophy proper, that is, starting from the greatest 'genera' of 'Being'—which are not classes of beings—their 'communion' or 'context'; second from below, searching in the human reality for that something by virtue of which it is concretely concrete.

Perhaps we can take only a few steps on either path. Perhaps the two paths do not yet meet and from each we can look for the other only from a distance. From below we reach the fabric of man's being only with the greatest, and after a long and ever renewed, effort, and perhaps only a part of it in a kind of image; from above we reach only abstract concepts, relations, 'ideas'. In his *Timaeus* Plato, the last of the philosophers to put the question of the meaning of 'is' to what he calls the soul, has the architect of the cosmos create the world soul by forging together the three mixtures of divisible and indivisible existence, divisible and indivisible sameness, and divisible and indivisible otherness. In these abstractions man remains at a remote distance, scarcely recognizable.<sup>35</sup>

Yet whenever man questions, the immeasurable difficulties notwithstanding, the meaning of 'is', he is compelled by the nature of the question itself to remember the one path in taking the other. He will trust neither abstractions that do not lead downward to the life of man nor an analysis of human



existence that is dependent upon the plight of modern ephemeral man.

In asking the question, man does not ask about something that is merely subjective, though an answer that misses the target may be merely subjective. By becoming manifest in the subject as subject, not in objects isolated as objects, the fabric of *esse* does not become something subjective. As *esse* of all *entia* that have a being in themselves, it is the most objective reality, and the sole support of all claim to objectivity. In the change of its aspect it remains what it is and, incorruptible, unpersuadable, sways the 'Being' of all beings.

When at the beginning of philosophy Heraclitus, in the quest for the 'hidden logos', the 'destiny' or the 'one wisdom', confesses to have "investigated himself"<sup>36</sup> he intends to say that this logos, concealed in the many dispersed things, can be explored solely in the soul of man "whose boundaries no one can find so deep is the logos of the soul."<sup>37</sup>

Hence in this thesis not everything and anything is 'being' by being observable or thinkable by or given to an observer. *Esse* or Being is neither the only relational being of objects qua objects nor the mutilated being of abstractions of thought. It is the *esse* of *entia* that as subjects have a being in themselves and not merely in reference to other beings whose objects they are. Such beings in themselves, subjects, are presupposed and forgotten again in all our talk about objects which, however, as far as they are merely objects, have only a mediated and derivative kind of being. The sole such being that is itself accessible to Man is Man.

The distinction between *esse* and *ens* distinguishes aspects. Man must make the distinction. His own reality compels him. Either aspect, alone and by itself, would be an abstraction. Man's knowledge is limited and will be forever. He is in-between 'knowledge and ignorance'. Man, however, by his very nature asks a question that by the same nature he cannot answer: Is the distinction between *esse* and *ens* relative only to man's limited knowledge or does it pertain to reality itself? Or would God too make the same distinction? In this question God is thought of as the omniscient observer outside the world, possessing 'perfect' knowledge beyond whatever 'max-



imum' knowledge may be attainable by finite man. This observer-god is the god of a human dream, the deified observer of an ideal science. Man is even tempted to answer with a foolish 'no' the foolish question whether this god too, like man, would be compelled by the nature of reality to distinguish between the two aspects.

The perfect knowledge of a divine observer is assumed to mean that this god, in rapture over the infinite diversity of beings of all kinds looking down at the immense spectacle, would comprehend the necessity of the smallest hair in the skin of an animal as determined by the laws that sway the order of the Many. Yet even this observer-god can escape the paradox of infinite knowledge only by descending to earth to be a man among men:

*Mahadoeh, der Herr der Erde  
Kommt herab zum sechsten Male,  
Dass er unersgleichen werde  
Mitzufuehlen Freud und Qual.*<sup>38</sup>

The reality, even relative to a perfect knowledge, is the reality of finite beings whose nature it is to be inbetween knowledge and ignorance, necessity and contingency. The gods of Hömer knew that. They played with one another the life of man. Aristotle's philosophical god is not an observer-god: he thinks himself, is concerned only with his perfection. The Christian God is saviour, not observer.<sup>39</sup>



## Chapter 7

# KNOWING AND BEING

THE IDEAL of an all-knowing observer haunts the history of philosophy—to teach man that what he is by telling him what he is not.

I confess that I have still another reason for speaking of *esse* and not of 'nature' despite the traditional theological burden of the term. Whereas nature, whatever the original intention, tends to become a *res* or thing, *esse* has some chance of retaining its character as a verb, even when rising to the position of a grammatical subject of a sentence. It was a verb when first uttered with a philosophical intent. In Greek the present participle 'being' and the infinitive 'to be' can be used synonymously and both as grammatical subjects.<sup>40</sup> Being means a state, like sleeping or being awake, a condition or situation—to be being. Only in the transition from Greek to Latin does Being become a being, *ens*. As state or conditions 'being' is, like sleeping and being awake, an occurrence. According to a definition of an old grammarian who follows the lead not of logic but of the living experience of thousands of years imbedded in language, the verb is a "part of speech with tenses and voices but no case, signifying acting and being acted upon"—*pars orationis, cum temporibus atque modis, sine casu, agendi atque patiendi significativum*.<sup>41</sup> Thus the



fabric of *esse* is the fabric of an occurrence. In this sense being is not opposed to becoming, but to not-being. Becoming itself does not become, it is.

If *esse* or being remains a verb it is not merely a verb in the empty sense of an either-or, of existing or not existing, in which we say of a thing that it exists or does not exist, as belonging or not belonging to the cosmos of the Many extended in time and space. As a verb it remains open for another meaningful sense in which we can speak of a being as more or less being, or as an *ens* having more or less *esse*. Every and any being, *ens*, craves to be, *esse*. Hence it is directed toward *esse*, not toward non-*esse*. This, however, is only a first directedness. Whatever the being, a fish in the water or a worm in the earth, it desires to be. Yet its mode of being may be immeasurable misery or dumb blindness. But the *esse* itself of any *ens* is 'directed', in a second sense, toward a particular *modus essendi* which we call happiness, underlying all happiness of all *entia*.

Whatever in the changing configuration of circumstances appears to be happiness to men or animals—to each according to its kind—is always a particular situation or condition or movement of the soul described in terms of the world of the Many with the changing conditions and things. Happiness as *modus essendi*, however, is nothing of that kind. As *modus essendi* it has its place in the fabric of *esse*, not in the order of the *entia*. Here it is forever the same, that *modus essendi* by virtue of which this or that transient situation of an *ens* in the order of the Many touches for a moment on happiness or seems to touch on it and does not, the measure of reality and semblance.

Our ways of speaking and thinking, fettered to the order of the Many, have great difficulty in seizing and expressing the *modus essendi* in terms independent of the changing configurations of the world of changing things.

Thus the distinction between *esse* and *ens*, or the fabric of the One and the order of the Many, invades the senses of happiness and consequently the senses of 'good' and 'bad', imposing a distinction between an ontological or an ontic



sense of these and other terms which imply what in an unfortunate habit of speech is now called a 'value judgment'.<sup>42</sup> If such words are used and their meanings are identified and expressed in terms of the order of the Many in which conditions change and things or actions change their meanings or roles, what wonder is it that good or bad, so-called sets of value, are socially conditioned, mutable and relative?

In the ontological sense happiness as a particular *modus essendi* is fettered to the fabric of *esse* and carries with it the entire fabric. Hence it never relinquishes the co-presence of possible misery. Yet man, forever transgressing the boundaries set by his finiteness, tries to dream a permanance of happiness, even disparages any happy present because it is transient.

Since *esse* is a verb, it is not one of those objects of knowledge which, like the things of our objectified world, are indifferent to being known or unknown. *Esse* is occurrence; knowledge or ignorance of *esse* is itself part of the occurrence. In knowledge of *esse* something happens to the *modus essendi* of the *ens* that knows or does not know, although this occurrence happens to one of the many beings in the order of the Many, to a soul, which in such knowledge becomes full of light, or in such ignorance remains dark and muddy.

What in this knowledge changes is the manner in which the whole of *esse* is co-present in the *modus essendi* of an *ens*. Thus man may be justified in thinking of himself as being the only one among the innumerable beings that at least could be capable of such knowledge, while plants and animals live in the darkness of the dumb feelings of a moment.

Such knowledge of the fabric of *esse* is, however, not a knowledge of abstract concepts, notions, or ideas such as the ideas of sameness, otherness, divisible and indivisible being, rest and motion, which as the greatest genera are forged together in the fabric of being qua being.<sup>43</sup> The knowledge of these ideas and their communion may help us to maintain our knowledge of the logos of the One in the incessant change of the Many. Our knowledge of the fabric of *esse* may be knowledge only of images as images of *esse*. That of which



these images are images may in turn not be the *esse* of all beings but only its manifestation in man mingled with the particularity that distinguishes the human space from the space of all spaces whose texture the human space preserves. Of whatever kind this knowledge, idea or image, one thing it must be able to achieve.

The movement from ignorance to knowledge is like the movement of the soul in Plato's cave, a twofold movement. The man chained in the cave may turn away from the shadows of shadows and, ascending toward the light that throws the shadows on the walls of the cave, discern these ideas, and the highest of them all, the 'idea of the good'. Even by this knowledge he would not yet attain that perfect *modus essendi* unless he turns back into the darkness of the cave and, retaining the light in his soul, is able to recognize in those shadows of shadows the eternal fabric of Being. Then and only then might he finally be able to measure the mutable 'good and bad', just and unjust, beautiful and ugly, and their measures in the mutable societies by that 'good itself' which is the measure of all measures.

Therein, however, have I long since passed the natural boundary set to an inquiry of this kind, this language, and vein.



# NOTES

## PART ONE

1. When the environment of the observer and the observed is the same, the validity of any result is restricted to the particular society observed. Experiments are made, questionnaires answered here and now, directly or indirectly, in terms of the present conditions of a particular society.

2. Cf. the author's article, 'Critical Remarks on Man's Science of Man,' *Social Research*, XII, 4, 1945.

3. The prepositions of our language do not differentiate merely between a multitude of relations among different relata. They have a human meaning and articulate the unity of a context. Every man is 'in' and with, before and after, for and against, beside, between, among—in each case in various ways. Though some of these prepositions seem to refer only to space, others only to time, we would not misuse the language or speak metaphorically if we used them to describe human attitude and situations. Concrete life interweaves all in a contextual unity.

## PART TWO

1. I use the term without any of the connotations it has acquired in modern philosophical controversies. To avoid these connotations I could say 'life,' were 'life' not a term of biology that suggests to the modern reader a more or less mysterious quality of a few rather complicated organic beings among a majority of inorganic and lifeless beings. Nature is now and will for a limited time continue to be primarily inorganic nature. We expect the laws of inorganic nature ultimately to 'explain life.'

2. By using the term contract I do not claim or intend to contribute anything to the controversy of 'political' philosophy from Hobbes to Rousseau, the origin of government, state, civil society, or



sovereignty. Contract means here merely the silent or explicit agreement presupposed in any co-operation or partnership of mere interests in an 'it.' The pure case is an abstraction, intended to distinguish one element in social life from other elements. This element, like the other elements, is to be identified in terms of relations among human beings.

3. Within such a scheme in which specific relations are to be distinguished and qualified, the question 'what' claims priority over the question 'why.' In such a scheme motives would correspond to a vector directed toward a specific kind of relationship. This conception, though its apparent abstractness may be repulsive to many, is useful for bringing some order into the description, identification, and differentiation of 'motives.' The present state of the theory of motivation justifies the attempt.

4. He can never entirely abandon the human claim. When he does it in words, his or his children's deeds will sooner or later testify against his words. That holds for present-day man too; however standardized in behavior and thought, he will never be anything but a member of a class.

5. Thinking in terms of means and ends—the satisfaction of basic needs being the end, everything else merely the means to that end—is the fallacy nearest the modern doctrines of man. Even rational thinking seems to be merely thinking about the most efficient means to ends, foolish or not.

6. Cf. The analysis of the problem of communication and understanding in G. H. Mead, *Mind Self, and Society* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1934).

7. There is never complete knowledge. If two persons entirely knew in advance how the other would respond in acting, thinking, and speaking, such knowledge would break any friendship and love—even in marriage, though habit, laziness, and ties of interest might keep marriage breathing faintly.

8. Aristotle's *Politics*, based upon his *Ethics*, is social as well as political theory. The Greek city state is society rather than state. It presupposes even in justice an element of φίλια which Aristotle calls τὸ φίλικον. This φίλια, as presupposed by social life, is more than social sympathy and less than friendship in the sense of Aristotle's famous analysis of friendship in the last two books of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

9. It is irrelevant for the present purpose whether in terms of the controversies of the theory of knowledge the design of such an order of all possible experience is thought of as precondition that makes experience possible or as psychological fact, contained in and confirmed by any actual observation of the process of experience. What matters here is that no experience ever comes or came to be as a sum of single experiences.



10. Aristotle on space; *Physics*, IV, 212 A.

11. Cf. the author's article 'Jack and Jill,' *Social Research*, VI, 4, 1939.

12. The 'We' does not justify the concept of a 'group mind' as a subject of thought and action. When a group thinks or acts all the thinking and acting is done by individuals.

13. Part Four, Chapter I.

14. Balzac, no mean sociologist, lists five: *l'intérêt, l'or, le pouvoir, l'amour, l'idée*.

15. The term 'state' is used in many senses. The relation between state and society and the controversy over the logical as well as the historical priority of the one or the other depends upon the sense in which the term is used. The Greek *polis*, from which political theory began, is unity of society and state. *Politeia*, the constitution, means the social order and the way of life, not a legal document. Aristotle's 'political animal' means a social living being.

Cf. Charles H. McIlwain, *Growth of Political Thought of the West* (New York, Macmillan, 1932) and Sir Ernest Barker's explanation of the Greek terms in his introduction to Aristotle's *Politics*. If 'state' is used in the sense of the Greek *polis*, it means a 'political' society.

16. If here I replace the 'nothingness'—*das Nichts, le néant*—of the most modern philosophy by 'otherness,' I am aware that otherness cannot match the profundity of 'nothingness.' The absolute nothing cannot even be talked about and the nothing about which we can talk is relative to a meaning of something from which it is different; cf. Plato's *Sophist*. Even in 'basic anxiety'—*angoisse* or *ursprüngliche Angst*—man is confronted not with 'absolute nothingness' but with the relative nothingness that is merely an indefinite otherness, yet much more frightening. The articulation of the different meanings of otherness in the following pages tries to give anxiety its legitimate place together with other phenomena in the totality of the human context, and thus to deprive it of its usurped power.

### PART THREE

1. Even earth, water, air, fire, the four elements at the origin of philosophy, were not yet elements in our material sense. They were qualities rather than things. Moist and dry, warm and cold, light and darkness are fundamental qualities and powers opposed to each other. Aristotle, interpreting the pre-Socratics in terms of his own philosophy, misinterprets the qualities as elements of matter.

2. This can be shown by analyzing primitive languages in which the same things—the horse, the camel—have different names with different roots according to their relation to man. The sameness of the nearby and far away horse as horse is not the first interest of



human speech. The names are not yet names of a class of objects separated from man. Adam and Eve did not yet discover the zoological sheep and call it sheep. It seems that only in a later development did the word become the name of a class of objectified things—the variable relations to man being expressed by variations of the same root, endings, prefixes, or adjectives.

3. Cf. C. S. Pierce's pragmatistic definition of the 'object' in *Chance, Love, and Logic* (New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1923), p. 45: "Consider what might conceivably have practical bearings you conceive the object of your conception to have. Then your conception of these effects is the whole of your conception of the object." Cf. Pierce, *Collected Works*, Vol. V, 'How to Make Our Ideas Clear.'

This definition concerns only the object as object; it can be easily misused if too narrow a sense is given to 'practical bearing.'

4. Even in the case of an arrested civilization or a primitive culture where the same life repeats itself from generation to generation, the stability is not absolute. Changes take place, though they elude the contemporary observer.

5. Cf. the author's *Physics and Reality* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1940), pp. 10 ff.

6. Cf. Part Seven, Chapter 2.

7. Aristotle *Physics* IV, 210 ff.

8. The term 'classic' is ambiguous in more than one sense. It is sometimes opposed to classicism, sometimes to romanticism, both as a historical and a normative concept. This ambiguity, however, is not simply the result of arbitrary speech. While in some instances a past period of art is accepted as a norm and Phidias, Sophocles, Raphael, or Racine seem to become classics merely by virtue of their historical role, we cannot help calling in other instances works of art or a style classic without any such reference to a past period that is accepted as the norm by virtue of definite qualities. Many works of a classical period are not classics; some works can be classics though not belonging to any period that anyone would call classical. Cf. the author's *Traktat vom Schönen* (Frankfurt, 1935), pp. 86 ff.

9. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (1st German ed.), Preface, first paragraph.

10. Goethe, *Urworte*: Heraclitus, ἦθος ἀνθρώπου δαίμων.

11. La Rochefoucauld, 'Amour propre,' *Pensées*, Premier Supplément.

12. Modern Gestalt psychology speaks of isomorphism of body and soul. I interpret this fruitful and important term in the following way: There are not two realities of the same *Gestalt* or of an equal structure, each event in the one corresponding to an event in the other; the reality is one and the same reality. There are, however, two languages in which the one and the same reality is described. If these languages were perfect, the description of somatic and



psychic events would be isomorphic—different descriptions of one and the same structure. But since they are not perfect, the imperfect descriptions do not show the sameness of the structure. The effort of Gestalt psychology aims at an adequate language.

13. Text by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, music by Richard Strauss. My translation follows the meaning of the German text, Act I.

14. Hermann Weyl, *Philosophy of Mathematics and Natural Science* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1948), Appendix B.

## PART FOUR

1. Aristotle *Physics* IV, 222 b, 16–25.

2. Pseudohippocrates *De Victu*, 11.

3. Sophocles, *Aias*, 651.

4. A revolutionary government, by nature impatient, governs a people conspicuous for its patience. This patience is the product of many factors: large space, memory of a long serfdom, an agricultural economy, and the specific tradition of Eastern Christianity in which the faithful waits for an act of grace, the epiphany of God.

5. Cf. the author's article, 'The Social Psychology of Fear,' *American Journal of Sociology*, XLIX, 6, May 1944.

6. Schelling, *Philosophische Briefe über Dogmatismus und Kritizismus*; *Werke* I, Vol. 1, 320.

7. According to a report of *Theophrastus De Sensu*, 3.

8. Translated by E. Myers (Modern Library ed.).

9. Cf. Part Three, Chapter 3.

10. When the gods of polytheistic religions are drawn into the orbit of a society, humanized, endowed with distinct personalities, and become the actors in mythical tales and legends, they are and can no longer be the supreme power; a higher order is posited beyond the gods to which even gods must and do submit; this is the case with the gods of Homer. This higher order is posited, alluded to, but not qualified. The Greek names for this order are *μοῖρα*, *δίκη*, and *θέμις*. It is usually thought of as of later origin, product of a more mature mind. Since, however, much older testimonies too, such as the Gilgameshepos and Egyptian stories about quarrels of gods refer directly, or intimate a reference, to a higher order or to norms above the gods, the later origin can be doubted. It can be argued that the idea of such a higher order emerges by necessity, simultaneously with the humanization of the gods, not by any historical influence but from the inner nature of religion.

11. According to Milton, 'the true church may consist of a single member.' Tertullian says: For you who are outside society whatever happens in society is irrelevant.

12. Augustine, *doctrina saluberrima tabescenti et labenti 'mundo.'*

13. Goethe, *Gedichte*, 'Die Braut von Korinth.'



14. V. Brochard, 'Epicure,' in *Études sur la philosophie ancienne et moderne*.

15. The Greek word *Χάρις* is untranslatable. It unites the esthetic and religious meaning of 'grace'—the esthetic grace of the Greek gods, shaped by poets, not by priests, is an integral part of their divinity.

16. Nietzsche, *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, Vol. I, Aphorismos, 213.

17. Cf. a more detailed analysis in the author's article, 'Play and Seriousness,' *Journal of Philosophy*, XXXVIII, 19, September 1941.

18. For the philosophical problem of 'quality' in art and its relation to 'truth,' cf. the author's *Traktat vom Schönen*.

19. Bergson's *Le Rire*, Freud's wit and its relations to the unconscious, and Arthur Koestler's *Insight and Outlook* (New York, Macmillan, 1949), contain rich examples of all kinds. Yet psychological and physiological theories about the causes of laughter, however ingenious, do not reach the human attitude. They do not even describe it, let alone articulate its variations.

20. For the following short characterization of the Aristophanean comedy I am indebted to the excellent analysis in "Aristophanes and Athens" by Karl Reinhardt, *Von Werken und Formen* (Godesberg, Küpper, 1948).

21. Anthology, epigram 14.

22. With one exception: in the *Knights* Cleon is 'the Paphlagonian.' Nevertheless, the mask is unmistakable.

23. *Henry IV*, Part II, Act I, scene 2.

24. *Henry IV*, Part I, Act III, scene 3.

25. Goethe in the *Achilleis*, V, 305 ff. Hera about Ares, the God of War. "Augenblickliche Kraft nur, Wut und unendliches Jammer."

26. *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, scene 2, 134.

27. Empedocles, fragm. 17, verse 25 (Diel's *Vorsokratiker*, 5th ed.), I.

28. La Rochefoucauld, Maxim 27. "L'envie est une passion timide." Cf. Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees*. Remark N. This is not equally true for all societies. The Greek envy was not timid.

29. Nietzsche, *Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, XII, 23.

30. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol*, III, 94. 'Beati in regno coelesti videbunt poenas damnatorum, ut beatitudo eis magis complaceat.'

31. David Hume, though he denies the self in the first part of his treatise on human nature, cannot help in the second part defining pride and humility as relations of man as subject to man as object with respect to something of which he feels proud or humble.

32. Joachim Gasquet, *Cézanne* (Paris, Bernheim, 1921).

33. Expression of Mandeville in his *Fable of the Bees*.

34. Cf. the more elaborate treatment in the author's article, 'The



Social Psychology of Shame,' *American Journal of Sociology*, XLVIII, 4, January 1943.

35. *Thesaurus Stephani* cf. *aidos*.

## PART FIVE

1. Goethe, *Gedichte, Legende*.
2. Ἰμερος γόοιο, *Iliad* XV, 14; *Odyssey* XVI, 215 and *passim*.
3. Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, lines 4-7.
4. Plato *Philebus*.
5. Aristotle *Ethica Nicomachea* VII, 12; *Magna Moralia* II, 7.
6. Goethe, *Gedichte*, 'Gross ist die Diana der Ephesier.'
7. Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, II, 311.
8. Cf. the following pages: Part II, p. 44 ff., and Part III, p. 108, and for the justification of the language used in these passages, Part VII.

## PART SIX

1. As the historian is a child of his time, conscious intention would lead a historian, unless he is a genius, to the type of moralistic rhetorical writing of which the Roman historians are not the only example. The conscious intention of the historian should and does end with the transference of the particularity of the dynamic field in the particularity of the historical events he reports.

## PART SEVEN

1. Descartes, *Méditations*, II.
2. Plato *Sophist* 244.
3. Aristotle *Metaphysics* Z, 1028, b, 3.
4. For the time being quantum physics invades the realm of biology while the riddle of life invades the dominion of physics and remains a riddle.
5. Cf. the more elaborate treatment of the relation of the scientific observer to the physical reality in the author's *Physics and Reality*.
6. The physicist is compelled to acknowledge two reasons for boundless astonishment; at present he is confronted with a smallest unit of life, the virus, which, though only one molecule, consists of millions of atoms, forming a structured whole, not an aggregate—a riddle he may hope to solve in the end. Yet he faces the still greater wonder, unsolvable on the basis of physics, that he as a physicist can contemplate this structure and ponder upon the solution of the riddle.
7. The concepts of present-day physics, imbedded in instruments, are concepts of macrophysics even when the observation aims at microphysical events. We observe the traces these events leave in the observable macroworld.
8. In changing ways and variable terminologies. Today physics is



statistical, its laws are statistical laws, its knowledge knowledge of the average. The expectations this knowledge supports are subject to a rule of inaccuracy. This inaccuracy decreases with the number of events contained in the occurrence observed. It is  $\sqrt{n}$ ,  $n$  being the number of these events. If  $n$  is a very large number  $\sqrt{n}$  is a very small percentage, negligible for all practical purposes. Hence we are confronted with the following situation: occurrences in the macroworld are πρότερον πρὸς ἡμᾶς, prior to us; but ὕστερον φύσει, posterior by nature. Occurrences on the small scale are πρότερον φύσει, prior by nature, but ὕστερον πρὸς ἡμᾶς, posterior relatively to us.

9. Even Kant acknowledges an 'affinity' of nature to the categories of understanding. Without such an affinity a chaotic heterogeneity of natural forms could not make experience possible.

"Erste Einleitung zur Kritischen Urteilskraft," Chapter IV, *Werke*, Ausgabe von Cassirer, V, pp. 190 ff.

10. The idea that the natural sciences constitute nature as their subject matter is not only a thesis of Kant and those who wittingly or unwittingly follow Kant. Even Galileo in his controversies with the Aristotelians of his day occasionally uses similar language, though in the spirit of humility toward nature.

11. This it is with Hegel.

12. Predictability by man or by God? Relatively to a maximum knowledge attainable by man or by a divine observer having total knowledge of past and present? The question cannot be predecided by heuristic assumptions.

13. In this translation from mathematical language, into the naive language of the day, the concepts of 'exact science' lose their precision, their vague generality pretends knowledge but only hides our ignorance. Psychology and social psychology are fond of all kinds of 'mechanism,' of instincts, drives, withdrawal, aggression and defence, without even attempting to state the precise sense in which they use this 'scientific' term.

14. For science they would have to be propositions, judgments about verifiable facts, given to the scientific observer.

15. Hesiod *Theogony*, 116 ff.

16. Nor of some usefulness for this or that human activity in the sense of F. C. S. Schiller's humanism or the American pragmatism.

17. 'Pragmatism' in its variations, though generated by a hunger for concreteness, does not ask this question. It has been introduced as 'a new name for an old doctrine'. As far as pragmatism can be interpreted as a thesis about 'reality' it shifts the weight of the reality problem from the objects posited as absolute to the activities of the subject dealing with these objects. Yet the reality of these activities, though prior to the reality of the objects qua objects, is not subjected to an analysis that is independent of the objectified world of objects, as it should be, lest the pragmatist's thesis of reality be caught in a



vicious circle. In this way the reality of the subject, in a first step posited as prior to the objectified objects, is in a second step described and qualified in terms of present-day scientific knowledge about these objects. That means that the 'process of experience' is characterized by means and in terms of its half-finished products.

18. The logic of classes is not concerned with the relations of the different properties defining a class with one another or with their relations to the properties belonging only to the members of the class. Any bunch of properties, however artificial, constitutes a logical class. Hence the sterility of this kind of logic. The reality forces on us the problem of natural classes. Cf. Max Wertheimer, *Productive Thinking* (New York, 1945), pp. 204 ff.

19. Cf. the author's *Physics and Reality*, pp. 103 ff.

20. Plato *Meno* 81D: τῆς φύσεως ἀπάσης συγγένοῦς οὔσης.

21. Plato *Symposium* 202E.

22. *Hamlet*, II, 56.

23. Cf. the author's *Physics and Reality*, pp. 75 ff.

24. Edmund Husserl, "Das Innere Zeitbewusstsein", *Jahrbuch für phänomenologische Forschung*, IX, 1938.

25. Plato *Parmenides* 156D; cf. Aristotle *Physics* IV, 218 ff.

26. An expression of Plato speaking of space: *Timaeus*. 52B.

27. Concerning the role time and space and their structure play in art, cf. the author's *Traktat vom Schönen*, Chap. III, Das Rätsel des Ausdrucks, pp. 111 ff.

28. Existence, from *ex-sistere*, is a Christian word, connoting man's origin from and dependence upon God. Cf. Etienne Gilson, *L'être et l'essence* (Paris, 1948), p. 14.

29. Λόγος τοῦ ὄντος not τὸν ὄντων. Ontology as a technical term of philosophy is of late origin. Λόγος τοῦ ὄντος is the question of all questions going through Plato's later dialogues; concern with this question defines philosophy. Cf. Plato *Sophist* 254a: ὁ φιλόσοφος τῇ τοῦ ὄντος ἀεὶ προσκείμενος ἰδέα.

30. Percy B. Shelley, *Adonais*, 53.

31. It is not dialectic of the historical process in Plato's later dialogues. Under the impact of the Christian vision of history, it becomes dialectic of history in Hegel. The philosopher of Plato is διαλεκτικός. The διαλεκτικός must first of all be συνοπτικός, that is, comprehend the whole as whole. Plato *Republic* 537C.

32. Any order of the Many beings in this or any other world presupposes the logos of the One, though the logos of the One implies that there be an order of the Many extended in space and time, though not the particular suchness of this order in this world of ours. We do not have any right to preassume that this order of the Many or our cosmos is the only possible one. This assumption, to which we have a natural propensity, induces us to discard the ontological



problem and to expect that the order of the Many, that is, cosmology, can answer the ontological question. Even classical physics needs for a total determination an initial constellation which cannot be deduced from the laws of nature. That means: this cosmos of ours is a product of a particular history.

33. Possibility has many senses—of what and with respect to what? To be thought or to be real? Herein hangs a long tale. The distinction between *esse* and *ens* imposes the distinction between an ontological and an ontic meaning of possible and impossible. Under the aspect of *esse*, that is, of the logos of the One, the 'possible' is a *modus essendi* which, though at present not actual, for example, the happiness of a miserable man, is ontologically possible. This possibility is even as possibility present *in absentia* and therefore even as possibility part of the concrete reality, as the unity of the fabric of *esse* implies it. The ontologically impossible is absolutely impossible—*esse* itself excludes it. It is not-being. Man will never be God, as triangles will never be circles, though men, ignoring the geometry of *esse*, dream ever again and promise one another round triangles. Under the aspect of the Many possibility and impossibility mean historical possibilities and impossibilities and have an ontic sense.

There are beings, even modes of being, that under the condition of one time or another can or cannot come into actual being. If they are possible, their possibility may be more or less remote, their actualization more or less probable and improbable. Hence man's eternal quarrel with his lot is threefold: he quarrels with the boundaries of his finite existence—in vain; with the age into which he is born, and with the neighbor to whom circumstances have fettered him.

34. Plato *Phaedrus* 230D.

35. Cf. Plato *Timaeus* 35a ff. A few remarks in this study concerning the different senses of 'otherness' allude to their 'human' meaning. Part Three, Chapter 4; Part Two, "The Social Context as Occurrence"; Part Five, "The Perfect Event".

36. Heraclitus, Fragment 101; Diel's *Vorsokratiker*.

37. *Ibid.*, 45.

38. Goethe, 'Der Gott und die Bajadere'.

39. It is by necessity that the idea of an all-knowing observer haunts the history of philosophy, for the same reasons as the idea of the absolute or objective world (cf. Part Three, Chapter 2), which is nothing but the world relative to an all-knowing observer. Man's finite intellect is set against the infinite intellect of God, man's *intellectus ektypus* against the *intellectus archetypus* of a divine creator whose vision is creation or to whom the distinction between the possible and the real is meaningless. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Dialektik der Teleologischen Urteilskraft, par. 76 and 77.

40. Plato uses the present participle 'being' and the infinitive 'to be' synonymously. Even in Parmenides *ὄν* is the structure of Being, not



a being. We must think and say that it is; ἐστὶ γὰρ εἶναι, for 'to be' is. Parmenides, Fragment 6, Diel's *Vorsokratiker*, I, Cf. the author's *Parmenides* (Frankfurt, 1934).

41. Priscienus, *Institutiones Grammaticae*, Liber VIII, 1-1.

42. The term value is unfortunate and misleading, suggesting entities, and finally even a 'realm of values' as opposed to and separate from the 'realm of facts'. Hence the plight of all value theories. A value-free science, bent on 'getting at the facts' and protecting the observation from the bias of the observer, recognizes as facts only the valuations of the human beings or social groups observed. In evaluating, man attaches value to the objects of interest and desire. Societies have 'sets of values'. As valuations change, these 'sets of value' change. It is all quite simple and common sense—on the surface.

Sometimes man's valuations can go astray. How? Is not the only thing we can say that he changes his valuation and modifies his set of values? Should not the term 'value', if we use it at all, mean the reason we attach value to this or that object? But there is an infinite variety of possible reasons. The real reason may not be the reasons we confess, pretend, or believe we have. The distinction between *esse* and *ens* divides this infinite variety of real and imaginary reasons into two groups. The one remains an infinite variety of possible reasons, formulated in terms of the order of the Many, the things, conditions, and circumstances of the particular case. They are mutable and relative to the particular historical case in whose terms they are expressed. The other reasons have their place in the fabric of *esse*, which as *esse* is directed toward a particular *modus essendi*. They are the reasons by virtue of which all the other reasons are reasons; they cannot and ought not to be formulated in terms of a set of values and objects of valuation but in terms of meanings, functions, roles in the fundamental context of the occurrence we call life.

43. Plato *Timaeus* 35a ff. *Sophist*, 253C ff.



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